

Walsall & Willenhall CHRONICLE

Thursday, March 23, 2017

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MORE THAN ONE CHILD A WEEK ADMITTED TO MANOR OVER DRUGS



The Manor – latest figures on child drug abuse treatment

Major Hospital bosses have revealed that more than one child a week is admitted due to drug abuse – with patients younger than 13 being treated. Figures released by hospital bosses show that the problems are getting worse with cases rising every year.

While more than a dozen teenagers a year are being treated for mental and behavioural disorders brought on by using drugs or psychoactive substances.

Hospital bosses have stated there has been a notable rise of children self-harming by overdosing on prescribed drugs found in households rather than recreational drugs.

Conservative Councillor Rose Martin, formally responsible for health and wellbeing in the borough, warned the issue could lead

to a tragic death and said the priority was to find out where the drugs were coming from.

She said: "It is absolutely appalling if young children under the age of 16 are getting hold of these drugs. It surprises me if any child gets them, let alone so many and those as young as 12. We need to be speaking to parents and teachers to find out before a fatality happens."

In just nine months leading up to September last year 67 children under the age of 16 were diagnosed with 'poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances' – 13 of them were aged 12 or younger.

Out of those, four cases related to anti-depressants and two cases involved psychoactive drug ecstasy. The numbers are on

course to mark the fifth increase in a row – there were 45 child admissions in 2012, 48 in 2013, 65 in 2014 and 80 in 2015.

In the same nine-month period 22 under 18s were diagnosed with drug-related mental disorders. In previous years there were 33 in 2012, 35 in 2013, 21 in 2014 and 19 in 2015.

Caroline Whyte, head of nursing for children, young people and neonates at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, said: "There is often demand and difficulties on beds and resources. Also the behaviour of these children and young people can be challenging. We have taken steps to address this by employing dedicated staff to provide one to one supervision to high risk young people."

RETAIL

Walsall has highest rate of empty shops

WALSALL has the highest rate of empty shops than any other town in the West Midlands – but the picture is improving in the town, new figures have revealed.

The Local Data Company has released a national report which shows 22.8 per cent of shops in the town are vacant.

This places the town at the bottom of the list in the West Midlands, and ninth bottom in the country, for retail vacancy rates.

However, the rate has dropped in the town from 25 per cent six months ago, which figures were released for the first half of last year. The new figures are for the whole of last year.

The worst town in the country for shop vacancy rates was Burslem, where 31.1 per cent of shops were empty.

POLITICS

Get a grip over Brexit, says MP

WALSALL MP David Winnick has urged the Government to 'get a grip' on Brexit after it was announced the Prime Minister will trigger Article 50 on Wednesday, nine months after the country voted to leave.



Mr Winnick

Mr Winnick said he was 'yet to be convinced' ministers were fully prepared to enter departure negotiations and said the Government needed to 'get a grip' on the situation 'as quickly as possible'.

CRIME

Shoplift reports at nearly two per day

THERE are nearly two reports of shoplifting in Walsall town centre a day, according to the latest figures. Police received 736 reports in the 12-month period between February 2016 and January this year in the St Matthews area which includes the high street, Caldmore and neighbourhoods on the north side of the A454 Aldridge Road.

It is the second most frequently reported crime in the area below anti-social behaviour which saw 862 incidents in the period.

Walsall Council leader Sean Coughlan has called for a joint strategy between traders, the police and council.

INSIDE

HIGH PRAISE AT TIN TABERNACLE



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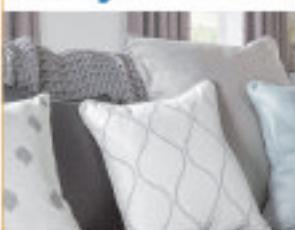
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£500k hope to improve 'outdated' CCTV system

CCTV cameras in Walsall are 'past their best' and 'not fit for purpose', it has been revealed.

Council bosses are now looking to spend more than £500,000 to update them and bring in new technology. According to a council report, the borough's entire camera system is 'outdated' and 'in a poor state of repair'.

Around 90 static cameras and 26 mobile cameras fixed to council vehicles - covering crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots - are monitored around the clock from a local authority base in Walsall Wood.

Council bosses are proposing to pay Transport for West Midlands £255,133 in 2017/18 and £288,707 in 2018/19 to buy, staff and maintain new mobile camera units and also improve the quality of cameras already in use.

The move will save the authority £32,480 in 2017/18 and £70,591 each year after that for seven years, when compared with how much it would cost to continue running the service in-house, according to the report.

Community chief, Councillor Julie Fitzpatrick, said: "We need better systems in order to prevent and detect crime, and in doing so, provide reassurance to people who live and work in Walsall."

Councillor Mike Bird, who launched an investigation into the quality of the borough's CCTV in 2015, said: "Police have said to us on numerous occasions that the quality of CCTV coming from our cameras was not good enough to hold up in court."

Car break-ins spark warning

A SPATE of break-ins to cars and vans in part of Walsall has sparked a warning for owners. West Midlands Police has said there has been an increase in incidents in Bloxwich warning that thieves can force their way into vehicles in as little as 10 seconds.

However the force has declared most break-ins are preventable and issued a checklist for owners.

PCSO Ian Palmer said: "There has been a recent increase in vehicle crime in the Bloxwich area most vehicle crime is preventable. It can take as little as 10 seconds for a thief to steal something from your car."

He urged people to remove everything from the car including jackets and reminded owners to ensure they close sunroofs and windows.

Sevens event to aid Beacon centre

A SEVEN-A-SIDE football tournament is being held in Walsall to raise funds for the Beacon Centre for the Blind in Sedgley. It takes place at Wolverhampton university's Walsall Campus on Monday from 9am to 5pm.



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David Pearce, of Highgate with his design

Pupil ready for new £1 coin on the way

THE new £1 coin designed by a Walsall student will be in circulation next week, with millions currently rolling off the production line each day.

The coin, designed by David Pearce, a pupil of Queen Mary's Grammar School, will be released for public use on Tuesday.

David, aged just 15 at the time, won a competition in 2014 to design the coin's face, which will feature the Welsh leek, the Scottish thistle, the Northern Irish shamrock and the English rose emerging from a royal coronet. He said at the time he was

'really excited' and now his coin is just days away from being released to the public.

The coins are being made at the Royal Mint in Llantrisant, South Wales, at a rate of three million per day. The coins have hi-tech security features, including a hologram. It might take a little while for people to start seeing the new £1 coins in their change as they gradually filter into general use.

The old round pound, which was introduced more than 30 years ago, will be in circulation alongside the new

coin until it ceases to be legal tender on October 15.

£1 coins were first launched on April 21, 1983 to replace £1 notes, although they are still in use in the Channel Islands. The Royal Mint has produced more than two billion round pound coins since that time.

The production of the new coins follows concerns about round pounds being vulnerable to sophisticated counterfeiters.

Around one in every 30 £1 coins in people's change in recent years has been fake.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Street cordoned off after stabbing

A WALSALL street was cordoned off in relation to a stabbing which took place a week earlier.

Police closed off Camden Street, in Caldmore, last Wednesday as part of an investigation into an incident which occurred on March 8 when a man in his 30s was taken to hospital with stab wounds.

Detective Inspector Toni Naylor, said: "An area of Camden Street in Caldmore has been cordoned off by police pending a forensic search. The man remains in hospital; his injuries are serious but not life threatening."

CCTV van stationed at shopping centre

A POLICE CCTV van has been stationed at Bentley Bridge shopping centre, near Willenhall.

The aim of the mobile CCTV unit is to protect the public and help to reduce crime in the area, said police.

The complex houses restaurants, shops, a pub and cinema and is visited by thousands of people every day.

Last month, a girl was punched in Nando's restaurant at the site. The 15-year-old girl was attacked by a teenage boy on February 19 whilst out with her mother. A 17-year-old boy was voluntary interviewed.

Bubbling over to offer family fun

A RECORD-breaking internationally-renowned bubbleman is set to burst onto the scene at Walsall's Old Square shopping centre next month.

SamSam, also known as Sam Heath, will be holding shows on Tuesday, April 11 at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm. Among the Guinness World Records broken by SamSam are creating the largest free-floating soap bubble and getting the most people inside a soap bubble. There will also be face-painting and a craft workshop.

Funding to help speed crackdown

SPEED trackers will be used to deter motorists from driving too fast in Darlaston, thanks to a funding scheme.

A total of £2,394 has been awarded by Walsall Council's Darlaston Area Panel for the idea. It will see volunteers receive training from police for the devices. People wanting to join the Speedwatch scheme can contact Councillor Doug James on 07983 456213.

Speeding hotspots included are Midland Road, Willenhall Street, Pinfold Street and Wolverhampton Street.

Kasabian at Academy

INDIE rockers Kasabian have announced a string of intimate live dates, including a date in Birmingham. Their new album, You're in Love With a Psycho, will be released on April 28.

The band will play Birmingham O2 Academy on Thursday April 13.



A man is led away from Longfield House, Heath Town, Wolverhampton



Police enter a property at flats in Bilton

29 and February 8 - did thieves manage to take the safe.

On March 1 this year, the would-be thieves smashed through a skylight at the Birches Bridge shop in Wolverhampton Road, Codsall.

They broke through a plastered wall inside, but left with nothing after being unable to get inside the safe. The damage at the shop has left the charity with a repair bill of more than £3,500.

Unopened

At the shop on Trysull Road in Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, raiders got in on February 16 through a rear window. The safe was damaged, but unopened.

Only in two of the burglaries - at Skinner Street in Wolverhampton and High Street Brierley Hill on January

Days after the sixth break-in, more than £1,000 was donated to the charity through an online appeal.

A total of 88 people made the donations, with charity staff taking to social media to thank those that had given funds.

The charity provides care to people in the Black Country, Staffordshire and East Shropshire.

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Volunteers sought for canal clear-up

VOLUNTEERS are being sought over the first weekend of April, to clean up the canals of the West Midlands.

Watery Recovery Group volunteers will be working from Wednesfield on the Wyrley and Essington Canal to Horseley Fields Junction up to Wolverhampton locks and then down to the Bradley Arm up to the workshop. Last year 70 volunteers spent two days removing 44 tonnes of rubbish from Walsall Canal.

Contact Chris Morgan on 07974 111 354 or email cbmorgan@sky.com for more information.

HS2 hub hopes for 77,000 jobs

AN ambitious 20-year growth plan based on the arrival of HS2 in the West Midlands could create up to 77,500 jobs, it has been claimed.

The plan for the UK Central Hub - which takes in Solihull, Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover and the proposed new HS2 Interchange Station - was unveiled last week at the MIPIM international property show in Cannes.

Supporters say it could add £4.1 billion to the local economy, taking in 775,000 sq m of development land and provide space for up to 4,000 homes.

Third of farmers hit by dumping

MORE than a third of farming businesses in the West Midlands and Staffordshire claim to have had illegal waste dumped on their land in the last three years, research shows.

An awareness campaign has been launched in the affected communities who are largely unaware that they are open to fines, prosecution and even imprisonment due to ignorance of the 'duty of care' law. A new survey commissioned by 'right Waste, right Place' shows owners are increasingly turning to councils for help.

Folk festival to feed fans' imagination

THE Imagined Isle folk festival is back in Birmingham Town Hall from May 12 to 14, featuring acts such as Dan Walshon Friday.

Saturday includes folk legends Fairport Convention's 50th anniversary tour concert with support from Benji Kirkpatrick at 7.30pm. The Sunday sees a concert from former Bellhead singer Jon Boden at 2.30pm.

Tickets are available for the individual concerts or for the weekend at £58 from the box office on 0121 780 3333.

Scientific schools

FIFTY-EIGHT schools from across the West Midlands took part in Demo Day, which enabled pupils to take part in science activities, with practical hands-on science demonstrations.

Last Thursday's event was organised by the British Science Association (BSA) as part of British Science Week.

Warning to mums as glass test fails to confirm disease

Ashley-Jay Greatorex, seen just before he



Anna Hanslow, who tried the glass test



The extent of the rash is shown on this picture taken by Anna

Advice on careers is praised by inspectors

PUPILS, staff and parents are celebrating after a school in a Black Country borough was rated as good in every area by inspectors.

Following a recent inspection at Aldridge School, the Tyning Lane site was found to be making good progress by Ofsted inspectors, while behaviour was noted as being good and the curriculum described as broad and balanced.

Inspectors said leaders and governors had a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and teachers had good subject knowledge. Students were also praised for being confident, considerate and proud of their school.

David Mountney, head teacher, said: "We really welcome the inspectors' findings which show we are good in all areas. We have maintained this since our previous inspection in times which are challenging for all schools."

Ofsted praised the school's sixth form students saying they are appreciative of the support they are given and make good progress in both academic and vocational qualifications.

They also praised the school's careers guidance, which was a particular strength.

However to improve, the report says the school must consistently challenge the most able pupils and teachers must implement activities, which are well matched to all pupils.

Toy fair all set to roll into town

THE next Toy and Train Collectors Fair in Walsall Wood's new Oak Park Active Living Centre takes place on Sunday.

The Coppice Road venue continues to offer more stalls with a greater selection of collectible toy cars, trains, aeroplanes, buses and accessories plus lots of other collectables including Lego, template toys, model figures, sci-fi toys, books, porcelain dolls etc.

Organisers Geoff and Linda Price are looking forward to another busy event and encourage young and old collectors to come along.

Visitors can still park on the old car park off the Lichfield Road and be able to follow the pathway to the new centre. Doors open from 10.30am - 3pm. Admission is, for adults £1.80, children £1.

Rubbish fire leads to damaged sheds

A GARDEN rubbish fire which contained aerosol cans got out of control spreading to two sheds and a fence.

Two fire crews were called to the scene in Church Street, Bloxwich, around 7.10pm last Wednesday night.

They were there for around an hour tackling the flames.

Bloxwich watch commander Andrew Nicholls said: "I always say take rubbish to the tip, don't burn garden rubbish yourself."

Mother issues meningitis alert as rash covers baby

By Jack Avery

BABY Ashley-Jay Greatorex is fighting back to health in hospital after a meningitis rash covered his body in a matter of hours when the glass test 'failed'.

Hundreds of people have been following the Support Baby Ashley Facebook group after his mother Anna Hanslow put out pictures of her poorly four-month-old to show how quickly the rash can spread.

The mother of four, from Walsall, is warning other parents to be aware that the potentially lethal condition does not always have the same symptoms and the glass test is not failsafe.

But although Ashley is still poorly, the antibiotics are taking effect and his condition is improving. Anna told the Facebook group: "I'm so happy right now!! Although he still is poorly. He's doing a good job and I'm so proud of him!"

Covered

She told of her 'amazing little boy fighting his way through this' as Anna revealed that his infection levels were continuing to fall.

Ashley was taken to Walsall Manor Hospital after his mother noticed a few spots and a high temperature. Within 24 hours of the first spots appearing he was covered in a rash.

She said: "He started with a high temperature and he was fine until I noticed a few spots.

"They spread really quick. They were not flat or raised, it was a different rash to what doctors normally come across and they said they have never seen it spread so quick. They could not work out the rash at all."

After a string of tests Ashley was diagnosed with meningitis and septicaemia.

Anna said: "Watching my son be poorly like this is the last thing I want. But I'm here and I'm strong for my boy. No matter how much I cry I will



Ashley-Jay in hospital for emergency treatment – one of the pictures his mother posted on Facebook

Symptoms to look out for**SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:**

High temperature; A bulging soft spot; Heavy sleepiness; Fast or difficult breathing; Extreme shivering; 'Pin prick' rash marks; Vomiting or refusing to feed; Grunting sounds; Irritability; Cold hands and feet; A stiff body with jerky movements or else floppy and lifeless; Muscle aches or joint pain

always be here. Not being able to hold him properly is so hard."

"I'm trying to be so strong for him but I just want to break into a million crumblies and take this nasty disease away."

Parents are advised to run a glass over a rash and if it doesn't fade under the pressure it is a possible sign

What you should do:

The Tumbler Test – place a glass firmly against the rash. If you can still see the marks get help.

The Meningitis Research Foundation advises parents: "Trust your instincts. If you think your baby has meningitis or septicaemia get medical help immediately. Say that you are worried it could be meningitis or septicaemia."

of blood poisoning caused by meningitis and getting medical attention is strongly recommended.

Ashley is expected to stay in hospital for at least another week until he is given the all-clear by doctors.

Anna and her partner Kieron hope their son's scare will raise awareness of meningitis and its symptoms.

She said: "I am giving some pictures to warn people it does not always start like they say it does. Please if anyone worries about it, go get checked as soon as possible."

As well as the Facebook site, being run by Anna's sister Beverley Summers, a Crowdfunding appeal has been set up to raise funds for Ashley's family.

Target

It is hoped up to £1,000 can be raised to get some treats for the family and hopefully send them on a mini-break when young Ashley recovers.

Barry Summers urged people on the Facebook group to donate saying: "If every follower that has joined the group gave just a £1 we will reach the target of £1,000 to help with food, parking fees and a luxury for my sister, partner and all four kids."

The Crowdfunding site can be viewed by going to www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/SuperheroBabyAshley

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Walsall men jailed after guns found inside car

TWO Walsall men have been jailed for 15 years after hiding sawn-off shotguns under a car seat.

Yasir Nassir, aged 45, from Moncrieffe Street, and Kuldipinsigh Atwal, 49, from Stafford Street, have been jailed for seven and eight years respectively for possessing firearms.

The pair were in a Citroen C3 driven by Nassir when they were pulled over by West Midlands Police officers around 5am on September 10 on Newton Row in Birmingham city centre. Police spotted shotgun cartridges in the rear seat footwell and a search of the car uncovered two short-barrelled firearms, plus a starter pistol, hidden under the seats. The pair were arrested.

Subsequent searches of Nassir's home uncovered another shotgun, a silencer, two air rifles, pellets and blank 6mm cartridges. Both men were interviewed about the guns both in the home and in the Citroen but denied any knowledge and refused to answer any questions from officers.

However, Nassir eventually went on to admit possessing firearms while Atwal was found guilty on the same offences at Birmingham Court Court.

West Midlands Police Detective Inspector Vanessa Eyles said the tough sentences should act as a warning to anyone possessing illegal firearms.

She said: "This was a great piece of police work; intelligence suggested the car was linked to firearms and the information proved spot on."

Both men have previous convictions for violent offences.

Caravan arson suspects bailed

TWO men have been bailed after a caravan went up in flames in what is believed to have been an arson attack.

The caravan was destroyed as the flames took hold on Sunday, March 12, in High Heath, Pelsall. It was believed to have been used on a building site and no-one was inside it at the time. Ten firefighters tackled the blaze in Spring Lane at around 2pm.

Chiefs described it as an intense fire, with flames also spreading to a nearby garden fence and shed.

Two youths were arrested in connection with the fire but bailed until April 9, pending further inquiries.

Watch commander Andrew Nicholls, from Bloxwich Fire Station, said: "It is believed to have been a caravanning van for builders."

Canadian star in rock show

CANADIAN rock singer and songwriter Lee Aaron is to make one of only two UK appearances this year in the Black Country.

She will be performing with her band at Bilston's Robin 2 on July 17.

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Back to school for police chief's deputy



Ashley Bertie, with Great Barr students

ASSISTANT West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Ashley Bertie went back to his roots with a visit to his former school.

The 25-year-old returned to Great Barr Academy, to deliver an inspirational speech to students. Ashley, who was head boy during his time at the Aldridge Road school, spoke about his role as Assistant PCC, Stop & Search, mentoring, active citizenship and issues that affect young people.

Mr Bertie said: "It was pretty real going back to my old school as it wasn't too long ago that I was there

studying hard and playing cricket, basketball and football. But it was great catching up with my old teachers and I was truly humbled when the headteacher said she was going to put my picture up on the wall of fame."

"However, the best moment was definitely speaking to the students and seeing how engaged and enthusiastic they were. Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe and it is vital that we focus on our young people and the issues that affect them. By investing in our young people now and listening to their voice, we will reap the

benefits in the future. I spoke about how I've introduced an education workshop across the region and how the number of searches has reduced considerably but the number of positive outcomes has actually gone up."

Headteacher Ingrid Abrahams added: "Ashley has achieved in a few years what others achieve in a lifetime."

"His humility and commitment in the realm of advocacy captured the imagination of both staff and students. It was a pleasure to have him back at Great Barr Academy."

£1,000 daily costs of shoplifters at Wilko

A TOWN centre Wilko store lost in the region of £1,000-a-day due to shoplifters, it has been revealed.

Neighbouring retailers including the likes of M&S and Debenhams have now demanded action, with the latter allegedly being targeted last Monday when a thief made off with 10 pairs of jeans.

The issues, concerning shops in Walsall town centre, came to light when council bosses met with store managers.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting council leader Sean Coughlan said: "We met with the town centre partnership who are suffering tremendously with people who have decided they are not going to work for what they get and instead they are going to go around and rob stores.

"In the run up to Christmas Wilko was losing £1,000 a day they said." Afterwards Councillor Coughlan spoke at greater length about the issues.

The leader said: "We met with the town centre partnership on Monday night about how we can regenerate the town centre.

Shoplifting

"The manager from M&S, Debenhams, and Wilko were there, all the big players, as well as the owner of the Saddlers Centre. They all said anti-social behaviour and shoplifting were a real problem in the town centre.

"The guy from Wilko was talking about the effect of opening up late prior to Christmas to generate sales, and the fact it also causes its own problems. The guy from Debenhams said someone had just walked into their shop and stole 10 pairs of jeans that day."

Councillor Coughlan declared the authority had a significant responsibility and role to play in doing their own work to deter thieves. He added: "We have been really good with things like travellers but there is more we need to do. "M&S said they had lost their security provision but it was more efficient to bring it back.

"But to be honest there are things we can do especially in terms of working in partnership. We want a strategic view involving the traders, police and council about how we tackle these problems."

While the leader admitted Walsall had its own problems he said shoplifting was an issue everywhere. He said: "There are a few specific issues in Walsall and I honestly believe there are ways of dealing with those. But shoplifting is prevalent everywhere."

Fly-tipping crackdown as fines soar



There have been 5,389 incidents of fly-tipping in Walsall in the last year alone

COUNCIL bosses have rubber-stamped a 400 per cent increase to the amount fly-tippers can be fined in a bid to clean a Black Country town's 'dirty face'.

The on-the-spot punishments will rise to £400 from £80 from April 1 in Walsall. The cabinet approved the increase on Wednesday on the back of a report that revealed there had been 5,389 incidents of fly-tipping in the borough in the last year alone, amounting

to nearly 3,000 tonnes of illegal waste which cost the council £408,000 to shift.

That sum does not even include large messes left behind by unauthorised encampments such as Delves Common last year when a large group of travellers ran riot in the area for more than a week.

Deputy Council Lee Jeavons also welcomed the new fines. He said: "It shows we are taking ac-

tion. Council officers work very hard to get investments into the town but one of the things we are hearing from retailers who we are inviting in, is that they pick up on the dirty face of the town."

As well as the sterner punishments, Councillor Ian Shires called on the offenders to be named and shamed: "When we do get these interventions we should make them high profile. We shouldn't apologise for it."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jail for woman in £9,000 fraud

A 58-YEAR-OLD Great Barr woman has been jailed for 14 weeks after admitting a £9,000 benefit fraud.

Belinder Kaur from Scott Road, pleaded guilty to three offences committed between 2010 and 2015, when she appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

She was sent to prison by Judge Barry Berlin who told her: "You were warned that if you made false statements for benefits you would be prosecuted.

This was deliberate dishonesty. You knew perfectly well you should not have claimed these benefits."

Travel company scoops awards

BLACK Country Chamber of Commerce is celebrating Travelstar European as member of the week after the Walsall-based coach company won a number of prestigious awards at the National Express Awards 2016.

Those that they received at an awards night included the awards for Engineering Gold Standard, Operator of the Year and High Achievement – for the seventh consecutive year.

Opened in January 2017 by the Mayor of Walsall, the business has invested over £1million in new premises in Portland Street.

Children's care plan for lodge

A GUEST house in Walsall is set to become a care home under new plans recommended for approval. Horizon Care Education wants to turn Arden Lodge Guest House on Bloxwich Road into a home for children.

Young people up to the age of 18 would live in the home for between three and five years.

They would not have physical or mental impairment, but will have been 'adversely affected by circumstances and in need of a secure, stable and caring place to live'.

Club to swing in with jazz evening

THE Rotary Club of Walsall is hosting a jazz event tonight, Thursday.

The club is holding an evening of jazz, featuring Matt Ford and the Midlands Youth Jazz Orchestra, at Methodist Central Hall.

Tickets cost £15 with the event being held in support of the Glebe Centre in Walsall and Walsall Heart Care.

They are available from walsallevets.org.uk or in person from the offices of Fraser Wood, Walsall.

Boxes linked to drugs

BOXES of waste from cannabis production was dumped off a countryside lane near Aldridge.

The rubbish left on the roadside in Hobs Hole Lane was picked up by Walsall Council workers on Saturday. The council is investigating.

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What a fuss we all know we are the greater one

THERE has been a bit of a fuss about the Black Country being marketed as "Greater Birmingham" over at the annual regeneration jolly in the South of France.

While I normally recoil at any attempt to associate the Black Country with our noisy neighbours down the M6, on this occasion I think people are being a little bit harsh.

There's probably an innocent explanation. Indeed, I think it might be nothing more sinister than a simple typing error.

They meant to say Greater THAN Birmingham.

□ □ □

IN September 2013, Nicola Sturgeon told Scottish people to seize the "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" and vote for separation from the UK in the following year's referendum.

Now she is demanding another vote.

Look, I know life expectancy isn't what it should be north up there, but I think three-and-a-half years is pushing it a bit, don't you?

□ □ □

TERRIBLE news from down-under. Apparently, unless a new deal can be struck with Channel 5, Neighbours could finally come to an end in the UK after 31 years. Now be honest, how many of you actually knew it was still going?

□ □ □

IMAGINE for one moment you worked at the London Evening Standard. Not a pleasant thought, I admit, having to live down in the Big Black Smoke, but work with me on this one.

Having given you all for a few decades, you have worked your way up the ladder, and then the vacancy for the editor appears – and is given to somebody with next to no experience of the industry, has no formal journalistic qualifications, but who used to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. That will be good for morale.

Frankly, I couldn't care less how many jobs George Osborne has. Being a back-bench MP should never be anything more than a part-time job, and paid accordingly. It is the rise of the full-time MP that has created a generation of meddling career politicians with no experience of life outside Westminster.

What is ridiculous though is the way somebody so demonstrably under-qualified can walk straight out of Downing Street into such a difficult and demanding role.

The suspicion is that he won't really be editor at all, simply using the paper as a political platform while other, better qualified people actually do the work.

Still, for politicians wanting to bring those pesky newspapers to heel, there are worse ways than getting a few of your own in to run them. I bet Leveson wished he had thought of that.

It's the wealthy who objected to Hammond NI rises



Philip Hammond – humiliating U-turn was 'necessary to maintain voters' trust'



Judge Lindsey Kushner – only saying what a normal, loving parent would say



Nigel Farage – a blistering feud with the party's only MP Douglas Carswell

White Van Man – I don't think so

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



WAS anyone convinced, on Budget day, that the raging fury over the Budget was the authentic voice of White Van Man, roused to rebellion at the prospect of higher National Insurance payments? No, me neither. It all happened far too quickly. MPs simply didn't have time to consult their white-van supporters, even assuming they know any. But then we shouldn't assume that all self-employed folk are horny-handed sons of toil, nor that Chancellor Philip Hammond's U-turn in scrapping the NI rises will be celebrated in back-street pubs with pints of mild and a bag of crisps for the whippet. The term "self-employed" covers some extremely wealthy, well-connected and influential types, such as barristers, Fleet Street columnists and broadcasters who did not take kindly to Hammond's rises. History will record that this was a rebellion among white collars, not white vans.

I BET we were all delighted to see the lorry owned by a pair of despicable fly-tippers in Hertfordshire being sent to the crusher. Pity the fly-tippers weren't inside.

WHAT is the point of the continued existence of UKIP, now that voters endorsed the concept of Brexit in the referendum last June? You might think they would quietly and happily disperse under the banner of 'mission accomplished'. But no. UKIP does not disperse and it certainly does not do anything quietly. At the moment, they are engaged in a bitter and savage civil war of self-destruction that makes the troubles in the Labour Party seem tame by comparison. UKIP's former leader Nigel Farage is having a blistering feud with the party's only MP, Popeye the Sailor Man lookalike Douglas Carswell, who is said to be inching back towards his former party the Tories again.

YOUR kids are going out into town for the night. You tell them to take care. Or at least you

do if you are a normal, loving parent. And that's what Judge Lindsey Kushner was doing when she noted on her last day in court that women and girls who get blind drunk tend to be targeted by would-be rapists. If you believe all you see, the judge was widely condemned for 'victim-blaming'. But that's simply not true. I bet 90 per cent of the population thoroughly agree with her. What we saw in the media was a contrived and artificial controversy.

It was based on the views of a tiny number of campaigners and single-issue 'experts' who claim the judge's remarks may make women less likely to report rape. But Judge Kushner was desperately trying to prevent rapes happening in the first place, rather than picking up the pieces afterwards.

DOG walkers in wooded areas should stop using poo bags and adopt a "stick & flick" method, according to the Forestry Commission which has produced a poem to make the point: "If your dog should do a plop, take a while and make a stop / Just find a stick and flick it wide into the undergrowth at the side." I find myself also moved to verse, to point out the possible hazards of the new method: "Make sure that you've got lots of space / 'Cos stick-flicked *** goes all over the place."

PITY we didn't have a public naming competition for the Royal Navy's latest aircraft carrier which, as reported a few days ago, is overdue, over budget, understaffed and still waiting for its warplanes. HMS Whiteelephant McWhiteelephantface?

APPARENTLY we should all be more worried about nitrogen pollution than global warming. Yes, I know it's going to be hard after 20 years spent fretting about greenhouse gases but you don't want to be left behind in the anxiety stakes, do you? A charity called Plantlife claims air pollution caused by agriculture and engines is over-enriching our soil and encouraging the growth of "thuggish" plants such as nettles. Sorry to spoil the angst party but nettles are wonderful things. They are one of the most useful plants on the planet, rich in iron and vitamin C. You can eat them in salads, turn them into soup, brew them as tea or even turn them into nettle-yarn fabric. You could argue that an excess of nitrogen is giving us great bounty of a miracle crop. But that would be good news, and who wants that?

THE Scots were assured by their political leaders that the 2014 vote on independence from the UK would be a "once in a generation" referendum. They are now being told to expect another one in a year or so. This one will also be a "once in a generation" referendum – unless they vote the wrong way again.

HALF-watching the telly, I caught the Prime Minister telling the Commons about a "catery trade delegation." I was heartened to think someone as busy as Mrs May could find time to chat with people providing holiday accommodation for cats. The delegation turned out to be Qataris.

MORE issues with the new £5 note. A reader writes: "Is it just me or does the new five-pound note have a life of its own?" He reports a problem with "escaping" fivers creeping out of his shirt pocket and wonders whether some curious reaction is going on between the polymers in the note and the polymers in the shirt material. Fascinating.

TALKING POINT

Attention! That's my Mother's Day wish

THERE is good news and bad news for my children as Mother's Day looms.

I do not want them to splash out on a bunch of flowers that will be considerably more expensive in the days before Mothering Sunday than at any other time of year with the exception, possibly, of Valentine's Day.

I do not want a novelty, twee gift such as a plaque or a vase with some motivational poem/message/logo on and I don't expect a huge and/or expensive card.

And I most certainly do not want to be wined and dined in an over-booked pub or restaurant. Inevitably tables are crammed together while the mass of increasingly bored children try to run around in the few gaps, adding to the wall of noise and the irritation that is already rising from the predictable wait as hordes of diners descend.

So that's the good news for my children. I am, if nothing else, a cheap date.

However, the bad news, they may think, is that I have to have their full, undivided attention for the day.

Despite the nauseating sentimentality and commercial hype today, Mother's Day was first celebrated in the UK in the 17th century which is long before America adopted it.

It began as Mothering Sunday and at a time when children were often sent away to work as servants or apprentices. It was considered important that children were allowed to visit their homes once a year. The time decided for the visit to home was the middle Sunday of the fasting period of Lent.

In these modern times, I consider myself lucky if I can pin my two teenagers down for one day a year – certainly when they are not busy staring at their hands – or rather the phones held in them!

Mother's Day, like Halloween or Valentine's Day, or even Christmas, is in danger of being swallowed up by the commercial opportunists. It has already been hyped up to such an extent that we just see it as another expense and more pressure to impress. Mother's Day doesn't even have the bonus of being a bank holiday.

Well I reject the hype – though that doesn't let my children totally off the hook.

On MY Mothering Sunday I want quality time with my children, I don't want to have to cook the dinner and I'd quite like the odd cuppa made for me too. I'd like to spend time chatting, maybe watch a film or take a walk, but most of all I want a relaxed day when none of us are rushing off or tied up.

Of course, Lent quickly leads into Easter and my children don't mind the hype if it means a great big calorific chocolate egg for them. So they might want to remember who gets that egg when planning my Mother's Day this year!

DIANE DAVIES

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Open up these disused corridors

I COULDN'T agree more with Andy Street, M6 Toll near Hammerwich, and the new bridge by Waitrose in Lichfield.

Another excuse is that made by a few residents who live along the track scared of anti-social behaviour, yet it is this same dereliction and abandonment that has greatly exacerbated this problem. A properly-funded and constructed route would offer protection for these properties and also increase the value if a little vision is applied.

Meanwhile MPs, county councillors, and council officials who are employed and well paid to provide these alternative modes of travel do nothing. Come on, stop spending money on pet projects that nobody wants.

BRIAN STRINGER
Brownhills

Dissenters will face enforcers

THOSE who naively believed that they would be freed from over-interference from governments by voting to leave the EU should think again.

Michael Heseltine has been sacked for disagreeing with Theresa May and her backers and this is what we can all expect. This culture of shutting down dissenters is what we see as normal in China and North Korea and it will shortly be coming to a place near you.

If you do not agree with government actions be careful. The signs are all around us – you will have grammar schools – you will obey the manipulated views of a small majority.

This attitude will spread from the top down through the NHS, the police, large companies and so on. Forget freedom and prepare yourself for dictatorship.

ROGER WATTS
Walsall

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicals adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at www.ipso.co.uk. If you are unhappy with the accuracy of a story, write to The Editor, Chronicals, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Privatising dreams of candidate

WEST Midland Mayoral candidate Andy Street puts forward an intriguing idea in his publicity: "Using the John Lewis model of 'mutuals' to drive public sector reform....give staff a stake in the success of the organisation."

Is that a great idea? Well, it's an old one; David Cameron toyed with it in 2011 but soon dropped it. In a 'mutual' like John Lewis, employees are part owners and share the profits. But where are the profits in schools and hospitals? And with no profits, where's the incentive for employees to make this work?

Of course, there could be profits – but only if all our schools, hospitals and council services were privatised! This 'mutual' idea is really privatisation in fluffy clothing. Andy Street should come clean: will he privatise all our West Midlands public services or not? We deserve to know.

RICHARD WARREN
Aldridge

Team lines up for praise

PRIOR to the recent school half term holiday the faded and indistinct yellow lines outside Rough Hay Primary School were a cause for concern. We value good road safety measures in Darlaston to keep our young people safe.

A big shout-out for Walsall Council Highways and Road Safety Team who completed an excellent refresh and paint job on our yellow lines in front of our school. Motorists please notice the parking restrictions!

Thousands have previously made their choice and chose the Walsall CAB.

Now, thousands will not have a choice and will not have somewhere to receive help.

CLLR DOUG JAMES
Walsall

NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Walsall Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

walsall.chron@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Nowhere to turn for proper advice

WITH a total of 10 staff redundancies procedures commenced at the Citizens' Advice Bureau, thousands of local people across Walsall will be left with nowhere to turn to for help with resolving urgent and serious problems.

It is clear that the cuts imposed by Walsall Council's recent budget proposals will disrupt frontline and outreach services.

Just as local people struggle to cope with other reductions in council services and a massive increase in council tax and cost of living pressures.

Walsall CAB provide a vital lifeline when local people have debt, benefits or housing and employment worries.

The cruel irony is that a volunteer-based service which provides excellent value for money will save money in the long run.

Reducing staff and services means losing highly skilled dedicated staff and volunteers.

A tragic waste and a false economy, when you take into account the resources invested in creating trained volunteers who provide such an excellent, friendly and flexible service.

The cuts to this organisation are both short-sighted and wrong.

Would you rather have support from a trained and dedicated staff member or well supervised volunteer or a council administration worker?

Thousands have previously made their choice and chose the Walsall CAB.

Now, thousands will not have a choice and will not have somewhere to receive help.

CLLR DOUG JAMES
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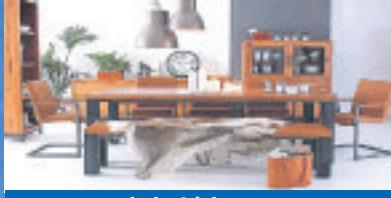
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Colleges' merger is ruled out by bosses

A FORMAL merger between South Staffordshire College and Walsall College has been ruled out by their principals and governors.

They cited 'a number of complex and costly implications which would arise from bringing the two colleges together'.

There were also concerns that 'a newly merged college would take a considerable amount of time'. A merger had been proposed by the Department for Education (DfE) saying that South Staffordshire College, which had to make £2 million of cuts in 2015, would benefit from the 'financial strength' of its Walsall counterpart.

A report as part of the Black Country and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire further education area reviews stated the merger would create a college with a combined £59m turnover.

Discussions between South Staffordshire College, which incorporates the Cannock, Lichfield, Tamworth and Rodebaston campuses, and Walsall College, began last year.

Bosses have since been working together to determine whether a merger would benefit students, businesses and the

Awarded Jacob goes feet first for musical



Leading man for Footloose, right, Jacob Kohli, aged 16, with his most promising singer under 18's award and Ella Colman

A VIBRANT slice of America is coming to the Black Country when the musical Footloose is performed next month.

The production is by Bilston Operatic Youth Company, an arm of Bilston Operatic Company.

It will be at Dormston Mill Theatre in Sedgley, starting from April 4 for five nights at 7.30pm.

The story follows a young man who moves to a small southern town and protests the town's ban against dancing. The film was originally made in 1984 with Kevin Bacon, and Lori Singer and then remade in 2011.

This is the third production for the youth company, which now has 45 members and only started out three years ago.

They include Jacob Kohli, who is aged 16, and comes from Finchfield, who recently received an award for Most Promising Singer under-18s.

Chairman Brenda Arnold said: "We chose Footloose because it was a good show for young people.

"It is very lively and a lot of fun for the members to get involved in."

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Bus firm puts blindness issues in the driving seat

NATIONAL Express drivers were given first hand experience of what it was like using buses if you are blind or partially sighted.

The drivers wore simulation spectacles which imitated three common sight conditions – and then were told to get on the bus.

Meanwhile, campaigners from the Royal National Institute of Blind People found themselves in the driving seat as they got a taste of what it was like for the bus drivers.

The Swap with Me experience took place at the National Express garage in Walsall as the company signed up to the RNIB Bus Charter to ensure services are accessible for customers with sight loss. The bus operator has pledged its support for the charter, which sets out 13 commitments it will make to improve bus travel.

Cataracts

To mark this occasion the Swap with Me event was held when both National Express drivers and managers, and blind and partially sighted campaigners swapped places to learn from each other's experiences.

Drivers donned the simulation spectacles to see what it was like for people suffering from age-related macular degeneration, cataracts and retinitis pigmentosa. They were then assisted by RNIB campaigners to board and navigate their way around the bus.

The campaigners also had the opportunity to sit in the driver's seat and experience what it's like to communicate with passengers through the driver's screen.

Peter Coates, Managing Director of National Express West Midlands, said: "Our drivers are all trained to help our disabled customers use the buses safely, easily and confidently.



Paul Bryce tries out the driver's seat during the National Express event



Campaigners and staff members during the Swap with Me Walsall event

We are very happy to demonstrate our commitment by signing up to RNIB's Bus Charter.

"We'd like to thank RNIB for organising this Swap with Me event. It's really brought home to our drivers how they can help our blind and partially sighted customers to use the buses more easily."

Natalie Doig, RNIB campaigns of-

ficer, said: "Blind and partially sighted people rely on bus services to get to work, visit friends and family, and be part of the community. Buses are a vital lifeline bringing independence to many people with sight loss."

To find out more about RNIB's Bus Charter visit www.rnib.org.uk/bus or call RNIB's campaigns hotline on 020 7391 2123.

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Conductor Bryan Jeffreys from Great Barr



Outside the Church of Christ the King, known as the Tin Tabernacle, Aldridge



The keyboard player accompanies the choir inside the Tin Tabernacle



The congregation enjoys the performance



A street view from 1938 which features the church on the right

Flat-pack church's milestone

WORSHIPPERS that have helped keep a 'flat-pack' church alive and kicking for decades have marked its 130th anniversary.

The Church of Christ The King, on Lichfield Road in Rushall, was built as a temporary place of worship to reach the working population of the parish back when it was first set up in 1886.

However, it was officially recognised as a place of worship the following year on March 8, 1887.

Locally, it is known as the 'tin tabernacle' and is still an active place of worship.

Concert

It was one of many 'flat-pack' churches that went up around the country during the Victorian era, but is one of very few still used today.

To mark the anniversary, members of the congregation were treated to a concert from the Walsall Harmonic Male Voice Choir and a special Sunday service followed by lunch.

Michael Blakemore, who has been a member of the church for more than 60 years, said: "We are very proud that we are keeping our small church alive after all of these years, it is a great source of pride for our village."

"It was one of many of its kind to go up around the country so people could have easier access to a place of worship, but not many, if any are still active today."

"This church is used by the next generation, so we keep it active ready for it to be passed to them."

The church is the daughter venue to the Rushall Parish Church of St Michael, one mile away.

"I would imagine ours is probably

the most active, anyway. We have the same services as a regular church and the same atmosphere, but the building is different."

"It doesn't matter where you are practicing your religion, as long as you are true while you do it and that is proved here."

"We had a lovely weekend to celebrate our 130th anniversary, the male voice choir show was packed to capacity."

Goldie's years to be outlined in new memoir

FROM the darkest depths of the West Midlands care-home system to collecting an MBE from Buckingham Palace – Goldie is set to release a memoir detailing his extraordinary life.

All Things Remembered, set to be released by Faber on November 2, will tell the story of how Clifford Joseph Price became Goldie, one of the most influential figures in British music over the last 30 years.

The man himself has promised it will be a 'book like no other', with details of his early days in Walsall and the Black Country given equal attention to his glory years.

Prior to this, on June 16, Goldie is set to release his first studio album in almost 20 years entitled 'The Journey Man'.

Speaking about the 'gonzo memoir', he said: "Don't wish too hard, kid, it might come true. Where am I? I'm on the stage at Ronnie Scott's, with the band bouncing off the end of my fingertips, the alchemy's flowing and I'm making the best music of my life and trying to understand where this all went right."

"All Things Remembered is not just the story of how and why, it's everything from the children's homes to the Whispering Wheels roller-disco to rolling with the graffiti kings of New York to writing with David Bowie to reinventing myself as the Dorian Gray of breakbeat."

Maria Garbutt-Lucero, of Faber, said: "It is an explosive story of abuse, revenge, graffiti, gold teeth, sawn-off shotguns, car crashes, hot yoga, absent fatherhood, and redemption through reality TV."

Olympics dressage star opens factory

A WALSALL manufacturing firm has been given the Olympic seal of approval after a silver medallist opened its new factory.

Dressage medal winner Spencer Wilton, who scooped the runners-up medal at last year's Rio games, opened Fairfax Saddles new factory in Bloxwich last week.

Fairfax makes saddles, bridles and girths, and his visit to the new factory gave Wilton the chance to thank the staff for their help in his Olympic success.

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Councillor is under fire for 'foreign' comments

PHEASEY residents have been labelled 'foreign' and 'alien' by a councillor having her say on proposed boundary changes.

Councillor Eileen Russell, a Labour member for the St Matthews area, told the Boundary Commission she approved of the Pheasey ward being 'hived off' from Walsall to a Birmingham Erdington constituency under proposals, which could be in place by the 2020 general election.

But her comments have since prompted a fierce backlash.

Councillor Russell, speaking at a hearing in Birmingham, said: "There are strong connections with Blakenall ward and Birchills and Leamore, to the town centre, and I think the hiving off of the Pheasey area to another constituency is a good idea, because people from that area are always seen as being a bit foreign, really, if you know what I mean."

Apology

Assistant commissioner Margaret Gilmore responded saying: "With a small 'P', I think is what you probably mean."

To which Councillor Russell answered: "It is, yes. Alien, I could have said, and it has been good for us having a female MP (Valerie Vaz) who represents all sections of the community happily, and I think that is really all that needs to be said."

But those from the Pheasey area, including Conservative member and former leader Mike Bird, have demanded a full public apology.

He said: "It is very offensive to people in Pheasey. People in an elected position should engage their brains before speaking. We did find it quite offensive quite honestly. We want more than just an apology. She needs



Councillor Eileen Russell, who made comments over boundary changes

to stand up in full council and apologise to us members and the residents."

Councillor Russell said she apologised for any offence caused but when asked by reporters if she would have used different words in hindsight the St Matthews representative said: 'no', adding: "My words have been taken completely out of context. They were just throw-away remarks at the end of the meeting."

"I just meant the character of people in different towns and different countries is very different. I never intended

to upset anyone. I most definitely apologise if I offended people but I never meant anything by it. But people who were in the room with me knew what I meant. Someone said to me after they understand people from Walsall have a special character. I am an honest person. Perhaps I should have been thinking more, but I didn't think for any moment I would cause offence."

The West Midlands could lose six Parliamentary seats by the 2020 general election as part of proposed changes.

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Thousands of jobs and homes on way

THOUSANDS of jobs and homes will be created as part of a new £53 million scheme to revamp former industrial sites in the Black Country.

The cash will be available over the next four years to deliver 1,600 new houses and 126,000 sq m of new commercial floor space across the region. It will create 1,800 new jobs.

Dozens of brownfield sites across the region will be decontaminated and brought back into use as part of the Land Funds scheme.

Bosses at the Black Country Local

Enterprise Partnership (LEP) said it would free up more land for development and housing across the region, and could lead to additional investment of £97m if successful.

The funding has been pledged following a successful bid from the LEP to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), which has earmarked £342m worth of schemes including the Black Country Garden City project.

Councillor Sean Coughlan, leader of Walsall Council and WMCA lead on land commission, said: "This has been

something we have been keen to get off the ground for a long while."

"The Black Country is in the unenviable position that as a result of our great industrial heritage we have been saddled with lots of land that is currently unfit to develop. The funding will enable us to address this issue and attract investment from the private sector as a result. It is also in keeping with our message that we don't want to build on green belt land."

Bosses say they are in the process of highlighting suitable sites.

Benefit gig for tragic teenager sells out



With lots of the donated sweets to be sold on the night are front, from left, Sharon Sambrook, Ben's mum, Jodie Homray with the guitar, Emily Sambrook the sister of Ben and members of band Sunday 44, at the back

A CHARITY concert for a brave teenager who died in early 2014 after a seven-year fight with a brain tumour has sold out.

Aldridge youth charity event BENefit Gig returns for its fourth year tomorrow, Friday, in the week which would have marked Ben Sambrook's 19th birthday.

The Aldridge student passed away in February 2014 at the age of 14 following years of fighting a brain tumour, going through gruelling surgery and treatment.

Just 10 days before his death, his friends held the first BENefit Gig to

raise awareness of the disease and money for brain tumour charities.

Julie Homfray, who is helping to promote the gig, which will be held at the Killock club in Aldridge, said: "Ben's wish was for the gig to continue – to raise money and to give young people of Aldridge the opportunity to showcase talent and to have local, safe night out."

The event has now become an annual event and attracts audience members and bands from schools and colleges all around the region."

This year, Aldridge School's 'In-teract Club', a group of 6th formers

committed to local fundraising, have also been promoting the event, which is likely to sell out for the second year running. Sunday 44, a Walsall six-piece band will return to headline the line-up.

Birmingham band The Real Cool are looking forward to making their first appearance at BENefit Gig, with more sets from Aldridge bands Under-ground Storm and Archers.

Ben's younger sister Emily Sambrook will headline the Aldridge Media Acoustic Stage.

All profits from the event are going to Brain Tumour Support.

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Ellie to lead way as Scouts ambassador



Newly-appointed Scouts Ambassador Ellie Simmonds

WALSALL Swimming sensation Ellie Simmonds will be helping young people go for gold in her new role as a Scout Ambassador. The gold medal winning Paralympian from Aldridge will raise awareness of Scouts' work to help young people develop skills for life alongside four other ambassadors. Her fellow new ambassadors include Olympic gold medallist Helen Glover, TV presenters Anita Rani and Steve Backshall, and adventurer Megan Hine.

They join current Scout Ambassadors, including Chris Evans, Ed Stafford and Julia Bradbury, as positive role models for young people. Chief Scout, Bear Grylls, was proud to welcome the five ambassadors to the Scouts family. He said: "Like our other volunteers and supporters, they are incredible role models for young people, embodying our values and inspiring the next generation."

"Each of them brings their own unique skills and talents and I know will help shine a light on Scouting's amazing work. Thank you to each and every one."

The five ambassadors will be encouraging more adults to join as volunteers. As testament to Scouting's popularity, there are over 46,000 young people on waiting lists around the country, meaning more volunteers than ever are needed to help with the demand and give young people the opportunity to join the Scout Movement.

Tim Kidd, UK chief commissioner for Scouts, said: "As flexible volunteers themselves, they show how supporting Scouting can fit around busy lives. I wish Ellie, Anita, Megan, Helen and Steve well on their new journey and look forward to working with them."

Chiefs reject scheme to boost cash for parades

COUNCIL bosses have rejected a proposal to stump up more money for remembrance parades across Walsall.

A scrutiny group on the authority had reviewed the situation and recommended traffic costs for events be split 50/50 between the council and office of the West Midlands Police and Crime and Commissioner.

By Carl Jackson

council and the police have organised special meetings in April, June and September so that these important events are given priority.

"We will do all in our power to reduce costs from these events and still keep people safe. Uncertainty about these events will not help anyone."

The scrutiny group also called on the council to explore the opportunity of parades being organised by council managers for areas of the borough. Their report added: "Further to this, investigations should take place into any suggestions that could assist the long term sustainability of Remembrance Day parades.

"This stands for this year. But because we have set out a four-year budget the following two years will be covered as well which gives certainty to organisers. This

"This should include establishing whether Remembrance Day parades could be organised under the auspices of a Town Centre or Area Manager."

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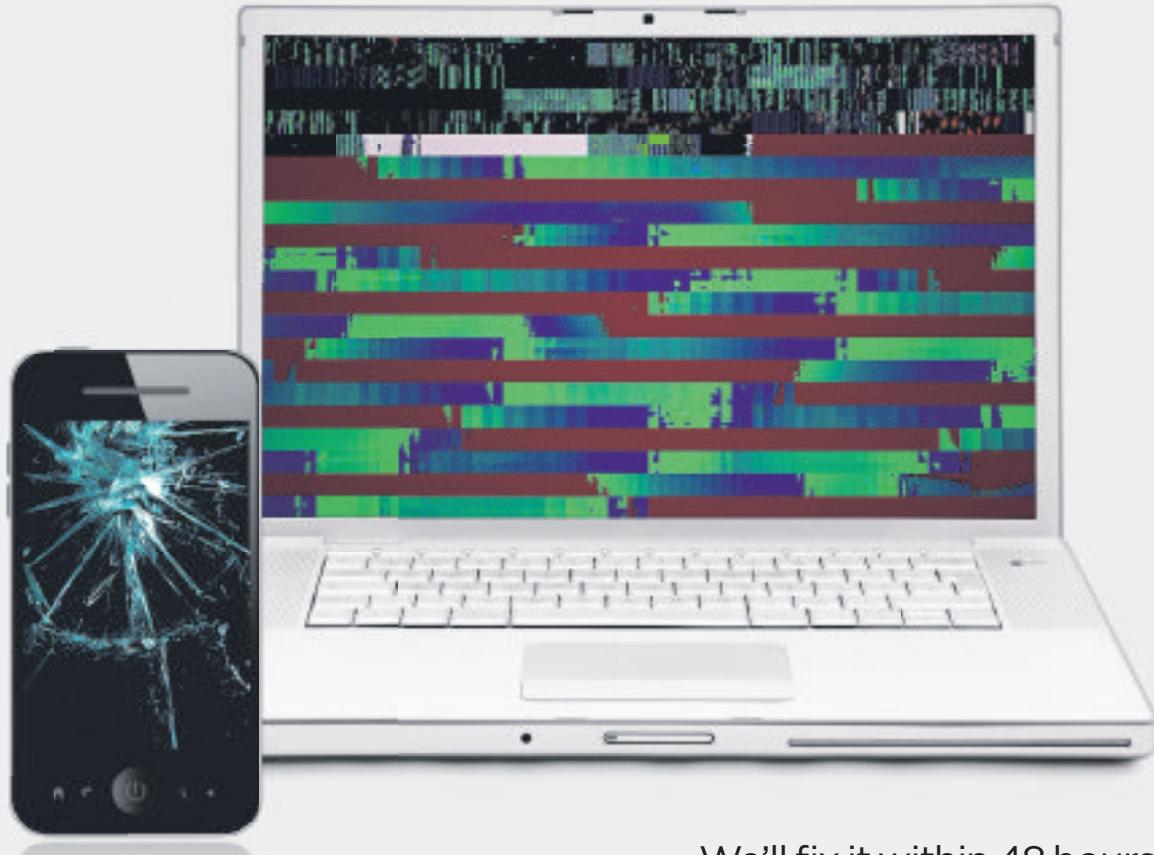
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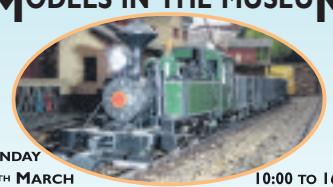
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Filling an arena...? It's not Impossible

He's the first to admit he could have ended up on the 'scrapheap' for good, but James Arthur is reclaiming his dreams. The singer talks to The Ticket about growing up, and why arena tours and a self-help book are up next.

The night before the Brits last month, James tweeted that if anyone had told him a year ago he'd be up for two awards, his response would have been, 'F**k off'.

And who could blame him? His tumultuous period after winning The X Factor back in 2012 was well-documented.

He rowed with fellow musicians online, offended the LGBT community and got dropped by Syco, Simon Cowell's record label.

It all read like a tale of self-destruction, rather than one of music success.

But now the Middlesbrough-born 29-year-old is back – and as far as surprise turnarounds go, he's crafted a career-revival that bows down only to Craig David's. He'll bring his solo tour to plays Birmingham's O2 Academy on Friday, March 24, and is on the line-up for V Festival in Weston Park in August.

James may not have taken any gongs home from the Brits but says it was an 'honour' to be nominated. Before that, his sophomore album Back From The Edge – released in October, shot to number one in the charts, as did lead single Say You Won't Let Go; he's back on the books at Syco, and has just started on a UK tour that runs throughout March.

MELTDOWN

"It's mind-blowing," he mutters softly, rolling his rings around his fingers as he speaks.

"At the Brits two years ago, Jimmy Carr got up and made some crack about me having a meltdown, and I remember watching it, thinking, 'I am a joke in this country, there's no coming back from this'.

"Not only was I an X Factor winner that got dropped by Syco, and when that happens you're never heard of again, but everyone thought I was a clown. I was in those 'where are they now' articles and I was like, 'F**k me, I'm that guy, I'm on the scrapheap'."

James credits his escape from the overcrowded pop scrapheap to a spirit forged through his unbalanced upbringing.

"I remember when my parents put me up for foster care and no one gave a f*** about me. I've been a survivor for so many years, I've always felt like I've been trying to survive and always found a way to climb out of the s***. That's just been a theme of my life, it's the mentality I've had to get out of the mire."

Opening up about that journey – from living in a bedsit, to winning The X Factor, and then watching it all crumble down around him – he says it left him feeling 40 or 50 years old.

"It's like I've been around for a long time, and to some people it might seem a bit bizarre me saying, 'I'm back from the edge', but it is wild when you think about it."

He says the comeback was fuelled by his on/off girlfriend, professional dancer Jessica Grist.

"I pushed everyone away, I ignored everyone. It was just me and Jess, who was so supportive and helped me through a million panic attacks and a million calling ambulances."

James has suffered from 'crippling' panic attacks since first

Back from the brink – James's new tour sold out in 10 minutes



appearing on X Factor, and reveals he has plans to pen an autobiography that will also serve as a self-help book for fans who endure similar issues.

Music's helped him cope with his anxiety, he says, and he wants to use his public platform to inspire others who feel overwhelmed.

"I'm really passionate about it and I really care," James explains. "My message to those that do have it [anxiety] is, I know regular things can be so difficult – going to the shop, just going outside – but I'm doing it. And I'm having to go out and be judged by it and by the world. So if I can travel to France and play a gig in a train station with thousands of people around, then you can get up and go to the shop, buy a pint of milk and you will survive, you'll be all right."

As for returning to Syco – the label reportedly wanted him back after Simon Cowell listened to James's second record – the singer says he initially wanted to reject their offer, but relented because he's a 'sucker for a story'.

"When they asked me to come back, I thought, 'Well I'm number one on iTunes already, so f*** you', but I'm a massive fan of fairy tales and underdog stories. I'm the

I pushed everyone away, I ignored everyone. It was just me and Jess

one person in history that they came back to, I like that that will be written, it's a bit of an ego thing.

"I felt like I had to prove myself to them, to let them know how good I am, how mature I've become and how much I've grown up."

For James, that sense of maturity means having more diplomacy when dealing with the label's A&R – those responsible for looking after musicians and their output.

"I'd never experienced A&R before and it p***ed me off. I hated A&R. I was like, 'Don't tell me how to make music, I've just won The X Factor, have a bit of faith in me – I'm James Arthur, I'm the best thing that's ever come from this show. I'm gonna make you a lot of money,'" he admits.

"But that's not how it works. If you're signed to a major label, you have an A&R, they do have to give opinions and if I was left to structure songs, we'd have eight-minute, obscure left-of-centre tracks."

He's pleased that Back From The Edge's success means he can now perform some different songs live. No doubt his fans felt the same; James's UK tour sold out in just over 10 minutes.

"We could've done arenas this time," he says, "but I'm happy because I love to do those packed-out rooms."

If his current winning streak continues, he'll be playing those arena tours in no time...

● James plays O2 Academy Birmingham on Friday.
● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.



On tour – New Model Army



Rock stalwarts spring back after release of album Winter

STALWARTS of the alternative rock scene for more than 35 years, New Model Army are back with a tour that brings them to Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Saturday.

The tour comes after releasing latest album Winter with customary contrariness at the height of last summer.

Formed by Justin Sullivan in Bradford in 1980, New Model Army's beginnings were inspired by punk rock and the incendiary atmosphere of the times.

Since then, they have had a long, creative and eventful journey. They have been massively influential in post-punk, folk-rock, political-rock, goth, metal and all kinds of

musical sub-cultures but have steadfastly refused to belong to any club that would have them as members.

NMA have built up an almost religious devotion amongst fans. Having grasped early on that the Internet was going to revolutionise the music industry, from the mid-1990s they set out on the now fashionable wholly independent path of controlling all aspects of their output. As a result, they have outlasted most of their peers.

Winter was released on the band's own Attack label. This album saw New Model Army receive the best critical response of their career and top 30 chart positions in UK and Germany.

The album is a powerful and emotionally

intense body of work. Says founder, lead singer and main songwriter Justin Sullivan: "I think Winter has a really strong identity. It is very much the sound of people in difficult places, something that so many of us can relate to at the moment, on a lot of different levels. We made a deliberate choice in mixing it to sound more aggressive and a little less polished."

Originally formed as a three piece, the current five piece features Michael Dean on drums, Dean White on keyboards and guitar, Marshall Gill on guitar and Ceri Monger on bass.

Tickets for New Model Army, supported by Under A Banner, at the Robin 2 cost £20 in advance or £22 on the door.

I'm just a normal bloke – Mouth of the South

AFTER a sell-out autumn tour, the star of BBC TV's Live At The Apollo, Mock The Week and Channel 4's 8 Out Of 10 Cats, Rob Beckett is back on the road touring the UK.

The 31-year-old comic from South London, nicknamed 'the Mouth of the South' due to his toothy grin, is one of the most popular comedians in the country, quick-witted with a matey likability.

"I just try and be a normal bloke," observes Rob, who is the popular host of the Absolute Radio show, Rock'n'Roll Football.

"At the end of the day, we're just chatting on stage. I'm genuinely grateful that people come to see me. If it wasn't for the audience, I wouldn't have a jet-wash, I'd just have an ordinary hose!"

"I've done hundreds of low-paid jobs in

my time. I used to work in a flower market carrying around bags of compost. So the fact that I can now put my face on a poster and people will turn up for the show makes me so pleased."

The comedian, who between 2012 and 2014 co-presented ITV2 spin-off show I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here! NOW!, says his rapport with audiences stems from his natural curiosity.

"I'm just nosy! I love talking to the audience and getting them involved. I really like hearing their stories."

Another element that keeps his Mouth of the South show fresh is the fact that Rob's material is constantly evolving.

The stand-up says: "I don't want to be living in fear of altering a routine. I'd rather change it and let it progress. I enjoy that much more. That's how I can do 200 shows on a tour because it's always growing and changing."

If I didn't do that, I'd have gone mad by now."

On tour Rob will be covering such down-to-earth, subjects as holidays, Christmas, cold calls and nights out. His routines are taken from his own life.

"I enjoy making people laugh. I'm as funny as I can be for 90 minutes. I try and take people's minds off things for an hour and a half. If you ever stop enjoying that, that's the moment to give up."

He adds: "Before I did stand-up, I'd always been rubbish at everything. I was doing all sorts of terrible jobs on the minimum wage and living in a grotty flat in Lewisham.

"Then I started doing comedy, and all of a sudden I finally found something I was good at and I'm not letting it go."

Rob comes to Birmingham Town Hall on Saturday (April 8). See www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

Brothers set to spread some joy at 02 Institute

INFLUENTIAL Scottish rock band The Jesus & Mary Chain, AKA Reid brothers Jim and William (pictured), release Damage and Joy, their first album for 19 years today and play Birmingham O2 Institute on March 31.

The Blossoms had a great 2016, playing Glastonbury, headlining their first UK tour and hitting the no1 spot with their eponymous debut album. See them at Birmingham O2 Academy on Wednesday (March 29).

Let's hope it's T-shirt weather when Liverpool's indie popsters Circa Waves play Brum's O2 Institute on Thursday (March 30), following the release this month of second album Different Creatures.



Acerbic Lee set to provide comedy

AFTER several years of his BBC TV show Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle, Content Provider is acerbic Shropshire-born Lee's first new full-length show since the award-winning Carpet Remnant World. It is being staged at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Monday and Tuesday night. Other comedy highlights are in Wolverhampton with Ignacio Lopez and Simon Emanuel at the Grand Theatre's Encore Lounge tomorrow (Friday); then Harry Hill's sometime assistant and Albert Square resident Charlie Baker at Wolverhampton Slade Rooms on Saturday.



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NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

CHOICE



Brendan O'Carroll

All Round to Mrs Brown's (BBC1, 9.15pm)

New series. Mrs Brown's Boys creator, writer and star Brendan O'Carroll dons Agnes's famous cardigan and curlers once again, throwing open the doors of the larger-than-life Irish matriarch's home to host a Saturday night chat show, filmed in front of a live studio audience. Inviting friends, family and special guests to join her in the sitting room, Mrs Brown stages mischievous stunts, and gives a few celebrity visitors a piece of her mind.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.** **10.00 Saturday Kitchen** Live. 11.30 Mary Berry Everyday. **12.00 Football Focus.** 12.30 Money for Nothing. (R) 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Bargain Hunt. 2.15 Escape to the Country. (H) 3.15 Wallace & Gromit: A Matter of Life and Death. (R) 3.45 Film: Brave. (2012) animated fantasy, with the voice of Kelly Macdonald. 5.10 Who Dares Wins. 5.50 BBC News.
- 6.00 Regional Programme.**
- 6.10 Pointless Celebrities.** Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present. (R)
- 6.55 Let's Sing and Dance for Comic Relief.** After three weeks of enthusiastic mimicry, the comedy-themed musical talent show draws to a close. Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins are on hand to present a live grand final, in which the six most popular celebrity performers from the previous three weeks battle it out. Back on March 4, first-round judges Katherine Ryan, Jo Brand and Frank Skinner were suitably impressed by Sara Pascoe's acrobatic turn as Chandler singer Six, while the public were wowed by Rickie Haywood and Melvin Odum's 1990s-era Will Smith medley. These two acts became the first to grab a confirmed place in the final, and tonight, they perform alongside their rivals from successive weeks to determine which off-beat performance will ultimately be named the winner. Taking a seat on the panel this week are Rufus Hound and Jason Manford, while Zara Larsson and Dua Lipa perform. Last in the series.
- 8.25 Casualty.** Robyn's baby daughter is rushed into NICU following her premature birth, and the new mother struggles to decide whether to follow her heart or her head when it comes to treatment.
- 9.15 All Round to Mrs Brown's.** New series. Brendan O'Carroll steps into the guise of Agnes Brown once again to host a Saturday night chat show, featuring mischievous stunts and appearances by celebrity visitors.
- 10.15 BBC News:** Weather; National Lottery Update.
- 10.35 Film:** Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End. (2007) Fantasy adventure sequel, with Johnny Depp and Geoffrey Rush.
- 2.10 (BST)** Weather for the Week Ahead. 2.15 BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.20 A to Z of TV Gardening.** (R) 7.05 Film: A Damsel in Distress. (1937) 8.40 Film: Hue and Cry. (1947) **10.00 Growing Up Wild: Natural World.** (R) 11.00 The Sun Under the Bed. (R) 12.00 Two Greedy Italians: Still Hungry. (R) 1.00 War Films, Talking Pictures. (R) 1.45 Film: The Wooden Horse. (1950) Fact-based Second World War drama, starring Lea Genn. 2.35 Fog It! **4.00 University Challenge.** (R) 4.30 Only Connect. (R) 5.00 Gardeners' World. (R) 5.30 Puerto Rico – Island of Enchantment. **Natural World.** (R)
- 6.30 Wild Ireland: The Edge of the World.** Part two of two. (R)
- 7.30 When Lynn Barber Met Phyllida Barlow.** Veteran journalist Lynn Barber interviews sculptor and art teacher Phyllida Barlow, 30 years after they first met as young mothers living in North London.
- 8.00 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands.** Paul Merton crosses the great natural harbour of Scapa Flow to the island of Flotta, before heading round the main island of Orkney to Stromness.
- 8.30 Dad's Army.** Mainwaring gives the platoon a lecture in communications and his men have an opportunity to put what they have learnt into action when an enemy aircraft ditches in a reservoir. (R)
- 9.00 Paula Rego: Secrets and Stories.** Making use of new interviews and a vast archive of home video, film-maker Nick Willing compiles an intimate portrait of his mentor, the acclaimed artist Paula Rego. While Rego has been notoriously private and guarded about her personal life, she opens up to her son, discussing secrets and stories from her life, which has seen her battle fascism, misogyny in art world, and manic depression. Willing's film dictates his mother's story from her native Portugal, where she used her pictures as a weapon against dictatorship, through to settling in London, where she turned her craft toward tackling women's issues such as abortion rights.
- 10.30 QI XL.**
- 11.15 Film:** The Reluctant Fundamentalist. (2012) Drama, starring Riz Ahmed and Liev Schreiber.
- 2.15 Film:** (BST) Albatross. (2011) 3.40 This is BBC Two.

ITV

- 6.00 CITV:** Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10 Bottom Knocker Street.** (R) 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) 6.45 Sooty. (R) 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 7.00 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 7.30 Scrambled!: Mr Bean. (R) 7.35 Scrambled!: Mr Bean. (R) 7.40 Scrambled!: Mr Bean. (R) 7.45 Scrambled!: Mr Bean. (R) 7.50 Scrambled!: Mr Bean. (R) 7.55 The Simpsons. (R) 11.25 The Simpsons. (R) 11.35 The Simpsons. (R) 12.30 Extreme Food. 1.00 Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. 2.50 The Restoration Man. (R) 3.35 A Place in the Sun. Summer Sun. (R) 4.35 Location, Location, Location. (R) 5.35 Grand Designs. (R)
- 6.30 Channel 4 News.**
- 7.00 Escape to the Chateau.** Dick and Angel only have a few weeks to prepare for their wedding, but the chateau is nowhere near ready to receive the 200 guests they have invited and finding reliable, affordable workers is proving difficult. Dick overcomes the damming of the moat and the installation of a new, eco-friendly sewage system, while Angel turns her attention to giving the rooms a distinctive decor. Last in the series.
- 8.00 Film:** The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. (2011) Seven English pensioners looking for a fresh start are drawn to an advert for a hotel in the Indian city of Jaipur, and plan to spend their retirement there. They arrive to find the building dilapidated but are won over by the enthusiastic young manager, and each embarks on their own adventures in the city. Comedy drama, starring Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Maggie Smith and Dev Patel.
- 10.20 CITV:** Weather.
- 10.35 Lethal Weapon.** A string of neighbourhood burglaries hits close to home for Murtaugh. (R)
- 11.35 The Chase. (R)**
- 12.30 Jackpot247. 4.00 (BST)** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) Hollyoaks. Omnibus.

SATURDAY'S TV MARCH 25

CHANNEL 4

- 6.15 The King of Queens.** (R) **6.40 Milkshake!** 9.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.30 Access.** 10.35 On Benefits: Life on the Dole. (R) 11.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 1.30 Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 2.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 3.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 4.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 5.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)
- 6.25 NCIS.** The first instalment of a two-part crossover with NCIS: New Orleans, in which the DC team co-operates with their Louisiana counterparts to catch a poisoner. (R)

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00 Milkshake!** 9.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.30 Access.** 10.35 On Benefits: Life on the Dole. (R) 12.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 1.30 Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 2.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 3.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 4.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 5.30 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)
- 7.10 NCIS: New Orleans.** The final part of a crossover with the original NCIS series. Elle Bishop heads to New Orleans to help Pride track down the person responsible for the aircraft murders. (R)
- 8.00 NCIS.** The team suspects foul play when a seaman who was set to testify before a grand jury dies before he can make his court appearance. When it becomes clear the man was murdered, the subsequent investigation reveals that a previously thwarted human-trafficking ring has been re-established. Meanwhile, a storm causes a massive power outage, and McGee seeks a room for the night among his colleagues. Naval crime drama, starring Sean Murray.
- 8.55 5 News Weekend.**
- 9.00 When Celebrity Goes Horribly Wrong.** Contributors including Union J's Jaymi Hensley, Vanessa Feltz, Carol Malone, Adam Rickitt and Carol Decker recall the highs, lows, tears, comedies and even asthma attacks involved in everything from sex scandals to television meltdowns. Unfettered episodes featured include Jimmy Carr's public shaming for tax avoidance, Naomi Campbell's blood diamond debacle, Justin Lee Collin's career-stopping harassment conviction and Leo Sayer's "clean pants" rant in the Celebrity Big Brother house. Plus, Dustin Diamond, of Saved by the Bell fame, reveals the truth behind his ill-judged sex tape and veteran newsreader Ed Mitchell describes how alcoholism left him homeless.

DIGITAL

- BBC Four**
- 7.00** Britain's Outlaws: Highwaymen, Pirates and Rogues **8.00** Timewatch: The Last Days of World War One **9.00** Follow the Money **11.00** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.15** Blonde: One Way or Another **2.30** (BST) Blonde's New York and the Making of Parallel Lines **3.20** Big in America: British Hits in the USA **4.20** Sounds of the Eighties **4.50** Close
- ITV**
- 11.35** Britain's Got Talent: Ant and Dec's Top 10 Moments **12.35** Take Me Out **1.50** Film: Rumour Has It (2005) **2.50** FYI Daily **2.55** Film: Rumour Has It (2005) **3.55** My Bean **5.05** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **6.00** FYI Daily **6.15** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **7.00** Corpse **8.00** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **10.00** Family Guy **10.30** Celebrity Juice Live **11.35** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **2.25** (BST) American Dad! **2.25** totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreeen
- ITV4**
- 11.35** Inspector Morse **1.50** Hans Christian Andersen: My Life as a Fairy Tale **3.35** Rosemary & Thyme **4.40** A Touch of Frost **7.00** Midsummer Murders **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Rising Damp **Forever** **12.00** Myclife **2.05** (BST) ITV3 Nightscreeen **2.30** Teleshopping
- E4**
- 12.00** Black-ish **1.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.00** Film: Addams Family Values (1993) **4.00** The Goldbergs **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Prometheus (2012) **11.30** Fierce 7 **2.50** World Cup Qualifier Live, Portugal v Hungary (Kick-off 7.45pm), **10.00** An Audience with Billy Connolly **11.05** Film: Assassins (1995) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15** Film: Assassins (1995) **2.45** (BST) ITV4 Nightscreeen **3.00** Teleshopping
- Film4**
- 1.00** Paddington (2014) **2.50** City of Ember (2008) **4.00** Brewster's Millions (1985) **6.45** School of Rock (2003) **9.00** This Is England (2006) **11.05** Dead Man's Shoes (2004) **12.45** Daredevil (2003) **3.55** (BST) Close

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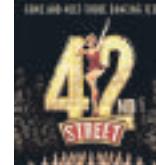
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ABTA
The Travel Association

OPENING TIMES: MON-FRI 8.30-19.00
SAT 8.30-16.00 SUN 10.00-16.00

Organised by Omega Holidays plc, ABTA V4782.

FILM CHOICES**MONDAY****Fury, Channel 5, 11pm**

A veteran American sergeant leads a tank crew on one final dangerous mission in the last months of the Second World War. The assignment takes the soldiers behind enemy lines and into battle with overwhelming enemy forces, while the presence of an inexperienced new recruit in the team raises tension. Drama, starring Brad Pitt and Shia LaBeouf. (2014)

TUESDAY**Amish Abduction, Channel 5, 3.15pm**

A young Amish woman visits her cousin in Charm, Ohio from the summer, where she discovers another world and finds friendship. But she soon has to choose which life she wants. Drama, starring Trevor Donovan and Daniella Chuchran. (2015)

WEDNESDAY**Michael Jackson's This Is It, Channel 5, 11.05pm**

Documentary following rehearsals for the singer's planned 50-night series of concerts at London's O2, immediately before his untimely death in 2009.

Featuring interviews with Jackson, performances of classic and an insight into the elaborate preparations for the shows that were never staged. (2009)



Dirty Dancing, Thursday, Channel 5, 10pm

THURSDAY**Dirty Dancing, Channel 5, 10pm**

A dance instructor at a 1960s resort hotel fears his career will be jeopardised when his regular partner is forced to pull out of an important show in which they are due to perform. Luckily, a naive teenager is happy to step in, and is treated to a whirlwind holiday education in life, love and expressing herself.

Romantic drama, starring Patrick Swayze. (1987)

FRIDAY**Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides, BBC1, 10.35pm**

Captain Jack Sparrow sets sail in search of the legendary fountain of youth. His mission puts him up against a mysterious woman from his past, old enemy Barbossa, now in the employ of the British Navy, and the most feared pirate of them all, the dreaded Blackbeard. Fantasy adventure sequel, with Johnny Depp and Penelope Cruz. (2011)

Rio gives a revealing insight into his personal life

Rio Ferdinand looked amazed when he sat down to address academics at Oxford Union a couple of years ago.

He'd spent nights worrying about the content of his speech, wondering if he had any common ground with the students. Then he realised they were all people that excelled in their field.

"I always knew from a young age that I wanted to be the best," he told them. So he set his sights on Man United, and wound up fulfilling his goal. Pun intended.

Fear of failure is what drove Rio on. From West Ham he moved to Leeds United "for a small amount of money" and became captain within a couple of months.

By the time he was playing at the World Cup in Japan, it was clear he'd impressed Alex Ferguson, who decided to take him to Manchester United.

Being an acclaimed footballer was a dream come true for Ferdinand. Little wonder his rags-to-riches story inspired many.

With a successful career and more than a few quid in the bank, he seemed to have it all, including a happy marriage to Rebecca and three kids, Lorenz, Tate, and Tia.

The couple had met while he was playing for West Ham United in the late 1990s. By 2009 they married in the Caribbean, and everything seemed perfect.

Then Rebecca received news that she had cancer; her life expectancy was believed to be between two and five years.

Alas the cancer was a lot more rapid and the family's world was turned upside down in May 2015 when she passed away, aged just 34.

In this moving documentary, Rio meets other families coping with bereavement, and looks at what help is available for parents and children who have experienced loss to move on with their lives.

"I don't think I've grieved properly," he explains. "I've not given myself that time to sit down and really flush everything out and go through it."

Here Rio explores ways of managing grief, including his own, and discovers the only way parents can help their kids move on with their lives is for them to begin to rebuild their own first.

Obviously Ferdinand is not alone; every day in the UK, around 75 men under 50 become widowers. This documentary offers viewers a broader insight into how young husbands and fathers cope with grief as the former soccer star speaks to other bereaved men who share their experiences.

By examining the issues around grief, the stigma men often face in displaying and discussing their emotions, and discovering some of the ways people cope with loss, the film highlights the obstacles bereaved men have to overcome.

"Rio Ferdinand has courageously allowed the cameras to follow him in this revealing and immensely personal documentary exploring the complexities of grief," explains Alison Kirkham, the BBC's Controller of Factual Commissioning and Events.



Rio Ferdinand: Being Mum and Dad, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

archipelago, Isabela and Fernandina, home to a diverse wildlife scene.

FRIDAY**Unreported World
Channel 4, 7.30pm**

A year has passed since decades of military dictatorship came to an end in Burma, and Aung San Suu Kyi began leading a new era of civilian government in the nation also known as Myanmar. However, the woman once hailed around the world is now being criticised for failing to bring real freedoms to many in the country, and the fighting against various rebel groups has intensified. Krishnan Guru-Murthy and director Karim Shah travel to the country to investigate whether its fledgling democracy can overcome such attacks.

**Spectacular Spain with Alex Polizzi
Channel 5, 9pm**

New series. The hotelier and presenter shares her passion for Spain's culture and people, and makes some new discoveries along the way. She begins in the north east, a region often overlooked by Brits, where she enjoys a luxurious cabernet grape body scrub, and is shown around an astonishing cellar full of ancient wines. Alex experiences the craziness of the San Fermin fiesta.

MONDAY**The Repair Shop****BBC2, 6.30pm**

We're often told we live in a disposable culture, where items are routinely thrown away and replaced, but it seems some people still know how to make do and mend. For this new series, a collection of skilled craftspeople, including furniture restorers, horologists, metal workers, ceramicists and upholsterers have been gathered together in once place to help bring broken or damaged family heirlooms back to life. Most of the objects come with a story attached, including the accordion featured in the opening episode, which belongs to a woman in her 90s who shares her memories of playing it during the Blitz. Other items featured over the series include a Davenport desk complete with fake drawers that fooled a burglar, and a pinball machine that currently doubles as a kitchen counter.

TUESDAY**Stargazing Live Australia****BBC2, 8pm**

New series. Professor Brian Cox and Dara O Briain travel to Australia to explore the night skies, with the programme joining them as they finish a long night under the stars and as dawn approaches. Brian and Dara are joined by Liz Bonnin on a remote

mountain top in New South Wales, site of the world-famous Siding Spring Observatory, and will have Australian outback-astronomer Greg Quicke as their guide to the southern sky, revealing some of the wonderful star-tales told by indigenous people.

WEDNESDAY**MasterChef****BBC1, 8pm**

New series. John Torode and Gregg Wallace return to put 64 more amateur cooks to the test. The first eight hopefuls begin by creating a dish using ingredients chosen from the new 'MasterChef market', stocked full of produce from all over the world, including pork mince, halibut and pannetta. Only five contestants will survive the first round, and the remaining cooks are then challenged to prepare a two-course meal to secure a place in the quarter-final. The amateurs not only have to impress John and Gregg, but also the finalists of last year's MasterChef competition.



MasterChef, Wednesday, BBC1, 8pm

THURSDAY**Galapagos****BBC1, 9pm**

Liz Bonnin and a team of boffins are hunting high and low for flora and fauna in this stunning new series. Located on the equator, the Galapagos is an archipelago where evolution has proceeded at a remarkable pace. However, with the climate fast, this tropical paradise is under threat. Ms Bonnin and scientists team up for the most ambitious scientific expedition attempted in this remote region. Episode one sees Liz joining the scientific team aboard the research vessel the Alucia on an expedition across the Galapagos Archipelago. The trek starts on the Galapagos' west side at the youngest, most volcanically active islands in the

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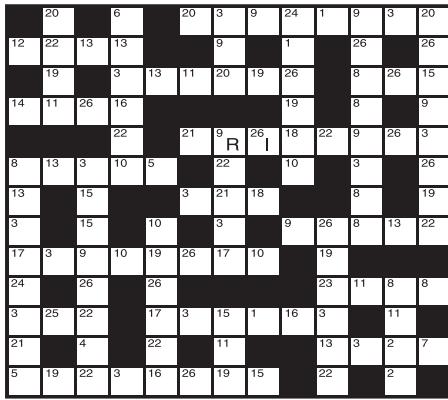
*All prices are subject to VAT

BRAIN GYM

No.422

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
C	T	W	I	D	M	H	S	K	E	X	O	F													
B	J	N	A	U	P	V	G	R	Z	L	Y	Q													

Quiz

- From where did Amy Johnson take off on her 1930 solo flight to Australia?
- Who assassinated Jacobin leader Jean-Paul Marat?
- How is the extinct Raphus cucullatus better known?
- To which family of instruments does the cor anglais belong?
- What is the capital of Slovakia?
- What do the letters AD stand for?
- Where does the London Boat Race start?
- What is a quetzal?
- In which gulf is Prince William Sound?
- Who is the muse of dance and choral song?

Double Crossword

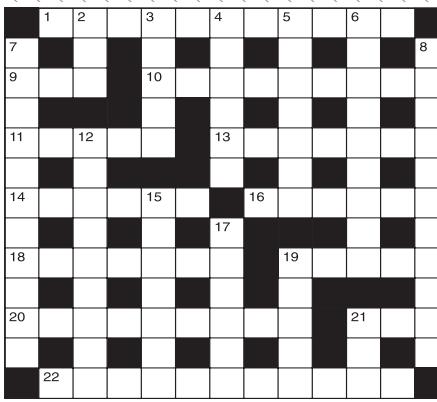
Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Tool for making two propellers (11)
- Frosty feeling - small whisky needed (3)
- Valuer to omit rates, maybe (9)
- Heavenly world tour! (5)
- Race methods used by 17 (7)
- The priests's area is bigger than European capital (6)
- A shelf with right book (6)
- Particular one found in different places (7)
- See 20 Across & 19Ac. In which the last ones are the winners! (9,5)
- Draw a bond (3)
- Suggestion for professional appointment (11)
1. Pardon (11)
2. Possess (3)
3. Corn (5)
4. Expressed (6)
5. Closest (7)
6. Incite (9)
7. Condemnation (11)
8. Free (11)
9. Herald (9)
10. Life (9)
11. Pale (5)
12. Finish in swapping pub employee (9)
- 15 & 2Dn. The kind of drink one is saddled with? (7-3)
17. Quick transport from Naples (6)
19. Negotiate to give patient attention (5)
21. The end of the implement is missing as well (3)
22. Sincere (4-7)

Down



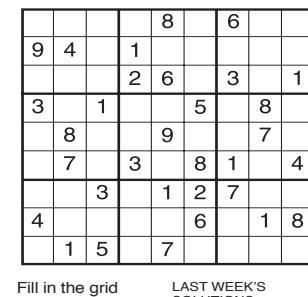
Quick Clues:

Across

- Sampling (3)
- Elicit (5)
- Impend; Congratulate; 20 Idaho; Tillage; 22 Dreaming; 23 West. Down: 1 Receiver; 2 Staff; 4 Arrest; Posthumously; 6 Improve; 7 Glad; 8 Standing room; 12 Adherent; 14 Isolate; 16 Carton; 18 Abase; 19 Hind.
- QUICK - Across: 1 Rose; 3 Sampling; 9 Chatter; 10 Sepia; 11 Infant school; 13 Elicit; 15 Impend; 17 Congratulate; 20 Idaho; 21 Tillage; 22 Dreaming; 23 West. Down: 1 Receiver; 2 Staff; 4 Arrest; Posthumously; 6 Improve; 7 Glad; 8 Standing room; 12 Adherent; 14 Isolate; 16 Carton; 18 Abase; 19 Hind.
- CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Rose; 3 Sampling; 9 Chatter; 10 Sepia; 11 Infant school; 13 Elicit; 15 Impend; 17 Congratulate; 20 Idaho; 21 Tillage; 22 Dreaming; 23 West. Down: 1 Receiver; 2 Staff; 4 Arrest; Posthumously; 6 Improve; 7 Glad; 8 Standing room; 12 Adherent; 14 Isolate; 16 Carton; 18 Abase; 19 Hind.
1. Cast; 3 Majestic; 9 Mourner; 10 Sepal; 11 Extravagance; 13 Divide; 15 Fillip; 17 Consultation; 20 Phase; 21 Valiant; 22 Creature; 23 Bear. Down: 1 Commands; 2 Spur; 4 Airman; 5 Ecstatically; 6 Typical; 7 Colt; 8 Incandescent; 12 Spinner; 14 Violate; 16 Clever; 18 Irate; 19 Epic.

Down

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	2	7	1	5	9	4	3	8
5	9	3	6	8	4	1	7	2
8	1	4	7	3	2	6	9	5
4	3	5	2	6	7	8	1	9
1	6	8	4	9	3	2	5	7
2	7	9	5	1	8	3	6	4
7	8	6	3	2	5	9	4	1
3	5	2	9	4	1	7	8	6
9	4	1	8	7	6	5	2	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Rose; 3 Sampling; 9 Chatter; 10 Sepia; 11 Infant school; 13 Elicit; 15 Impend; 17 Congratulate; 20 Idaho; 21 Tillage; 22 Dreaming; 23 West. Down: 1 Receiver; 2 Staff; 4 Arrest; Posthumously; 6 Improve; 7 Glad; 8 Standing room; 12 Adherent; 14 Isolate; 16 Carton; 18 Abase; 19 Hind.

QUICK - Across: 1 Cast; 3 Majestic; 9 Mourner; 10 Sepal; 11 Extravagance; 13 Divide; 15 Fillip; 17 Consultation; 20 Phase; 21 Valiant; 22 Creature; 23 Bear. Down: 1 Commands; 2 Spur; 4 Airman; 5 Ecstatically; 6 Typical; 7 Colt; 8 Incandescent; 12 Spinner; 14 Violate; 16 Clever; 18 Irate; 19 Epic.

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

74765423
2165423
84597845423

gives an element,
gives a second element,
gives a third element.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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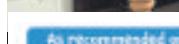
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- ✓ Journey on the Bluebell Line hauled by Flying Scotsman, and return transfer from hotel
- ✓ Free time in Windsor

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Only £149 pp

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Quote Code: AHQ469



View product online at
www.omega-holidays.com/AHQ469

Single room supplement £30pp. Subject to availability.



James Arthur is playing at the O2 Academy in Birmingham next Friday and it would be impossible not to enjoy a big night out. The Ticket's got the lowdown on where to eat, drink and be merry...

CATCH SOME ZZS



SPLURGE SLUMBER

Go all out and book a room at The Radisson Blu and enjoy sleep time overlooking the city skyline. With its modern and contemporary design it's got serious 'wow' factor for a night away. It's over the road from The O2 Academy on Queensway so within stumbling distance before and after the gig. Rooms cost from £67.50. But you could push the boat out and get a suite with your mates and swan about in bathrobe and slippers while listening to all of James's top tunes from the iPod dock and stereo.

DISCOUNT DEAL

If all you need is a basic bed for the night, spare any expense by sleeping easy at the Hotel ibis budget. It's down the road from the O2 on Great Colmore Street, so you won't even need to get a cab. It offers comfort in simple surrounds with a variety of bed options (twin, double or triple) and there's an unlimited breakfast buffet too. From £35 it's an absolute dream price and you can catch some zzzs knowing you could afford another ticket to see James perform again.

GRUB'S UP



The options are endless when you're in the heart of Brum. We reckon that James would happily head to Chinatown for some authentic cuisine. New Sum Ye in the Arcadian is a great place to try out. The restaurant is all about seasonal food using fresh ingredients full of colour and flavour. Try the crispy duck or the sizzling king prawn. It's a quick and easy pit stop to fuel up ready to dance your socks off and sing your heart out. If you fancy something really cheap, head to Mr Egg which is just the kind of place James would head to before some beers with the boys.

DRINKS ARE IN



It's a student hotspot with a real Indie vibe, so The Sunflower Lounge is the place to go for a few drinks before the gig. There's live music on tap so it's a good way to get you in the mood for the main event at the O2. Enjoy a cheeky drink or two upstairs and if you do fancy listening to some tunes head downstairs. Just round the corner is The Victoria which is a grand old pub with loads of character and a fantastic atmosphere. There are lots of wines, ales and cocktails on tap so it's perfect for getting the evening started in a right royal fashion.

GETTING THERE

TRAVEL TIME

As it's in the heart of the city centre it's easily accessible by car, train or bus. If you do decide to drive in, there are plenty of car parks near to the venue. They range in price from £1 to £5 for two hours. Or you can park further away and walk in. Catching the train is the best option as New Street station is a five to 10-minute walk from the O2 and trains run across the region. Buses into Birmingham come from all areas so if you live close by this could be a good option.

Express & Star

Design an Ad COMPETITION

The Express & Star is challenging local primary schools to design adverts in our 'Design an Ad' Competition.

We need all interested Headteachers/Teachers to register today, using the coupon below or by email, to be included in this exciting competition. Each school will be given an advertiser by the Express & Star and asked to come up with a ground breaking original ad to feature an 8-page colour supplement, published in-paper on Thursday 27th April 2017. Winning pupils will be invited to a special presentation ceremony to be held later in the year.

Interested?

Then complete the coupon below to register your school's interest and send to: Jo Watton, Business Development Department, Express and Star Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES or alternatively register via email at j.watton@expressandstar.co.uk. Closing date for registering is Saturday 25th March 2017.

Any queries? Phone 01902 319671 or 01902 319134



PLEASE PRINT IN BLACK INK

Register here today!

I would like to register (school's name)

FOR THE DESIGN AN AD COMPETITION

Name..... Position at School

Address of School..... Postcode..... Telephone.....

Signature.....



Super sale before makeover

Interiors Italia, the trend-bucking interior superstore, has popped up on the corner of Darlington Street and Waterloo Road for nearly a decade.

To get it ready for the next 10 years, the store is getting ready for a makeover, but before they can start... everything must go.

"I can't wait to get started," said Store Manager Roberta Colavito. "But before we can begin, we need to sell everything. We're having a huge sale and at these prices I hope people don't camp outside the shop. We're closing for two weeks to give the entire store a monumental makeover."

The doors will close at 6pm on Tuesday, April 18 to allow the store to complete its refurbishment. The new look store will open at 10.30am on Friday, April 28, when customers can catch the first glimpse of the revamped showroom.

Promotions

Until then, the customer service desk will keep normal shop hours and the helpful staff can tell you all about the updated store. As the launch draws closer they'll also be on hand to explain the offers and promotions to mark the relaunch.

For 10 years the 'Italian furniture shop', has forged its place in the heart of Wolverhampton's city centre. Roberta believes the store has held its ground against disruption in the retail market for many reasons.

"Perhaps we've held on so well because of the store's renowned style and its unique range, or because it has such a loyal customer base.

Over the last 10 years British retail has changed a lot. You can see this by the number of shops that are closing on the high street. Nowadays customers can buy anything they want without leaving their home. We have pieces to suit every style and budget and our



Wealth of delights to give a new look to your home



The shop front of Interiors Italia, in Darlington Street, Wolverhampton

customers love to discover and get inspiration when they visit the store.

Here, they can also feel and interact with the products and that isn't possible when you're shopping online."

The new look store will introduce a large selection of beautiful oak furniture and on the first floor customers will discover one of the largest independent bed centres in Wolverhampton. The refurbishment will also mean improved elevator access.

The improved lifts will enable shoppers to enjoy all three floors without the need to have a sit down half way, unless of course they fancy trying out one of the new designer Italian sofas.

From now until the launch, the business will

It is our goal to provide our customers with the best possible furniture shopping experience

be recruiting new staff to help in the refurbished store. Applicants can register their interest here at <http://www.italianfurnitureshop.co.uk>

"We are extremely grateful for all the support that we have received," Roberta Colavito concludes.

"We would like to thank everyone for their

patience and understanding while we enter this exciting phase of development. It is our goal to provide our customers with the best possible furniture shopping experience and on April 28, we move one step closer to that dream."

The signs have gone up in the windows and the 'Everything Must Go Sale' begins this Saturday (25) at 10.30 am.

Interiors Italia will be offering huge savings on all shop floor display items to clear the store ready for the refit. Customers can also take advantage of extra discounts on offer for new orders during the sale period both in store and online.

BUSINESS PROFILE

Business: Interiors Italia

Address: 79 Darlington Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4JD

Telephone: 01902 428489

Email: sales@italianfurnitureshop.co.uk
Website: www.italianfurnitureshop.co.uk

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interiorsitalia ■
the Italian furniture specialists

SALE STARTS 10:30am SATURDAY

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MUST GO!!**

HURRY WHILE STOCKS LAST!!
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79a Darlington Street Wolverhampton 01902 428 489

Store closes 18th April and re-opens 28th April



Extended semi presented to a show home level at Reedswood

Presented to a show home standard, this three-bedroomed semi-detached property in Rochester Croft, Reedswood, is for sale through L&S Prestige Estates at £165,000.

With double glazing and gas central heating, it lies on a generous corner plot with an attractive rear garden.

The property briefly comprises an entrance hallway, study/playroom, lounge with open plan feature staircase, conservatory and extended modern fitted kitchen with a centre island.

To the first floor are three bedrooms and a luxury refitted shower room. The home also comes with ample

off-road parking. It is accessed via a driveway leading to a paved pathway which in turn leads to a UPVC double glazed entrance door.

The entrance hall has built-in storage space, laminate flooring and plumbing for a washing machine. The study has a cupboard, laminate flooring and faces the front.



Property Auction

01543 505454 www.bootandson.co.uk

AUCTION

Monday 10th April 2017

7pm Prompt at

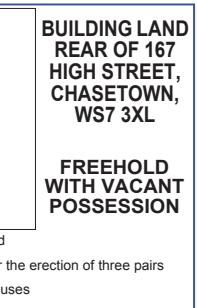
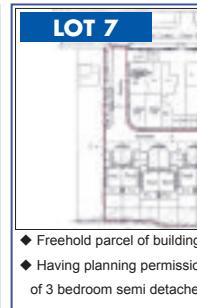
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79 Sharon Way, Hednesford	11.00am	11.00am
103 Stafford Street, Heath Hayes	11.30am	11.30am
Land to rear 167 High Street, Chase Terrace	12.00pm	12.00pm
75 High Street, Cheslyn Hay	12.45pm	12.45pm
Land to rear of 19 Watling Street, Churchbridge		
Land Adj 9 Whitgreave Lane, Rugeley		

* Viewings for 75 High Street - Viewing of vacant flats indicated above
Shops and occupied flat by appointment with auctioneers

LOT 5	LOT 6
LAND ADJACENT TO 9 WHITGREAVE LANE, RUGELEY, WS15 1NG FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION ◆ Residential Freehold building land ◆ With outline planning permission for 2No three bedroomed dwellings ◆ Approximate dimensions: Area 380m ² or thereabouts GUIDE PRICE £80,000 to £100,000+	103 STAFFORD STREET, HEATH HAYES, WS12 2EN FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION ◆ Semi detached house ◆ In need of refurbishment ◆ Three bedrooms ◆ Gas fired central heating ◆ All windows double glazed ◆ EPC rating E (52) GUIDE PRICE £120,000+



BUILDING LAND REAR OF 167 HIGH STREET, CHASETOWN, WS7 3XL
FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION

◆ Freehold parcel of building land
◆ Having planning permission for the erection of three pairs of 3 bedroom semi detached houses
◆ Site area - 0.49 acre of thereabouts
GUIDE PRICE £300,000+

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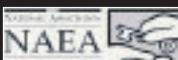
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Bathroom • En-Suite • Double Garage • Viewing Essential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressive Bungalow • 2 Reception Rooms • Kitchen Family Room • 4/5 Bedrooms <p>£355,000</p>	<p>SSTC Similar Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double Garage • Enclosed Rear Garden • NO CHAIN • Deceptively Spacious • Mid Terraced • Hallway • Lounge/diner <p>£99,950</p>
<p>SSTC Similar Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deceptively Spacious • Through Hallway • Lounge • Dining Room • Kitchen Utility • Attic Room • Conservatory • NO CHAIN <p>£109,950</p>	<p>reliqx</p> <p>we will sell your home for £995 +VAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Valuation • Free Professional Photos • Free Rightmove & Zoopla Listing • Plus Much More <p>Our new website is now live</p> <p>www.webbsestateagents.co.uk</p>

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KELVIN PLACE**

**SSTC
Similar Required**

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- Through Hallway
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Kitchen Utility
- Attic Room
- Conservatory
- NO CHAIN

£109,950

**BLOXWICH
WOODCROFT COURT**

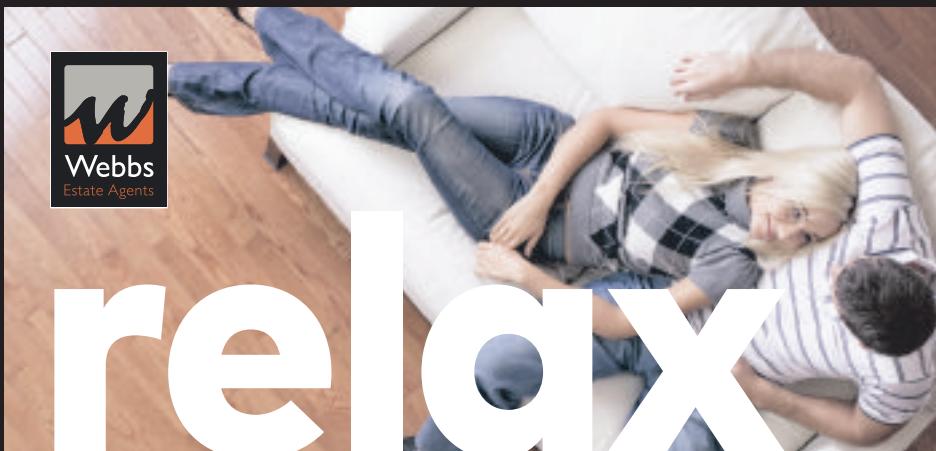
- Modern First Floor
- 100% SHARE
- Entrance Hallway
- Lounge
- Double Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Communal Grounds
- Parking

£80,000 OFFERS OVER

**WALSALL
GILLITY CLOSE**

- Dorma Detached Bungalow
- Entrance Hallway
- Large Family Lounge
- Seven Bedrooms
- Bathroom and Shower Room
- Sitting Room

£550,000



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Five Bedroom Executive Detached, Lounge & Separate Study, Modern Fitted Kitchen/Diner, Conservatory, Guest W.C., Family Bathroom, En-Suite to both Master & Bedroom 2, Office/Den, Double Garage & Off-Road Parking.

£665,000



HILTON LANE, STAFFORDSHIRE
Four Bed Detached Cottage, Sitting Room, Dining Room, Conservatory, En-Suites To Master & Bedroom 2, Modern Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Off-Road Parking, Landscaped Garden, Viewing Strongly Advised.

£450,000



COPPIE OAK, WILLENHALL
Executive Four Bed Detached, Spacious Lounge, Dining Room, Feature Conservatory, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Guest W.C., Two En-Suites, Family Bathroom, Ample Parkin. Gated Development.

£285,000



MILL LANE, WILLENHALL
Impressive Three Bed Detached Bungalow, 25ft Lounge, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Family Room, Family Bathroom, En-Suite Shower To Master, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Extensive Off-Road Parking, Rear Garden.

£270,000



SHERLOCK CL, WILLENHALL
Two Bed Detached Bungalow, Lounge, Impressive 17ft x 12ft Conservatory, Kitchen/Diner With Appliances, Family Bathroom, Gated Driveway, Garage, Front & Rear Gardens, Viewing Strongly Advised.

£269,995



COPPIE FARM
Four Bed Detached House, Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory, Kitchen/Diner With Appliances, Family Bathroom, Gated Driveway, Garage, Front & Rear Gardens, Viewing Strongly Advised.

£245,000



THE MANOR
Four Bedroom Period Semi-Detached House, Lounge, Dining Room, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Utility Room, Ground Floor Shower Room, Guest W.C., En-Suite Shower Room To Master, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Ample Off-Road Parking & Garage, Enclosed Rear Garden.

£225,000



POOLE'S LANE, WILLENHALL
Three/Four Bed Detached, Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory, Kitchen, Fitted Kitchen, Utility Room, Guest W.C., Modern Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Ample Off-Road Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden, Viewing Strongly Advised.

£220,000



RIVERBANK ROAD, WILLENHALL
Three Bed Semi-Detached, Lounge, Open Plan Into Diner, Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom, En-Suite Shower Room To Master, Double Glazing & Central Heating, Front & Rear Gardens, Driveway & Garage, Viewing Advised!

£175,000



ROCHESTER CROFT, WALSALL
Extended Three Bed Semi, Lounge, Conservatory, Playroom/Study, Modern Breakfast Kitchen, Luxury Shower Room, UPVC D/G & C/H, Detached Double Garage, Enclosed Rear Garden, Generous Corner Plot.

Offers Over £160,000



YORK AVENUE, WILLENHALL
Three Bed Semi-Detached, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen/Diner, Conservatory, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Front & Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden. HELP TO BUY AVAILABLE.

£150,000



BROOKLANDS PARADE, WOLVERHAMPTON
Newly Built Three Bed Detached, Lounge/Diner, Fitted Kitchen, Guest W.C., Modern Fitted Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Solar Panels, Driveway Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden.

£149,995



WEDNESFIELD
Extended Three Bed Semi, Lounge, Spacious Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor Shower/Wet Room, First Floor Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Ample Driveway Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden.

£135,000



QUEENS LEA, WILLENHALL
Three Bed End Town House, 19ft Lounge/Diner, Conservatory, Fitted Kitchen, Covered Outbuildings With Storage, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Off-Road Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden.

Offers Over £125,000



COALPOOL
Modern Two Bed Semi, Spacious Lounge/Diner, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor W.C., Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Ample Driveway Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden, Ideal F.T.B or B.T.L.

£100,000



VICTORIA STREET, WALSALL
Two Bed Mid Terrace, Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Loft Room, Modern Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Enclosed Rear Garden, Great F.T.B Or B.T.L.

£90,000



NEACHELLS LANE, WOLVERHAMPTON
Three Bed Detached, Two Spacious Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen/Diner, First Floor Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Off-Road Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden, Viewing Advised!

£595 PCM



SHEPHERD DRIVE, WILLENHALL
Three Bed Semi-Detached, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen/Diner, Storage/Inner Hall, First Floor Bathroom, Separate W.C., D/Glazing & C/Heating, Driveway Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden.

£575 PCM



TILDESLEY DRIVE, WILLENHALL
Three Bed End Town House, Spacious Lounge/Diner, Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Front & Rear Gardens.

£575 PCM



CROXLEY GARDENS, WILLENHALL
Well Presented Two Bed Semi, Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen/Diner, First Floor Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Front & Rear Gardens, Popular Location, Viewing Advised.

£550 PCM



DEVON ROAD, WILLENHALL
Two Bed Semi, Spacious Lounge, Modern Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Popular Location.

£550 PCM



ASHMORE LAKE ROAD, WILLENHALL
Two Bed Victorian Semi, Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Off-Road Parking.

£500PCM



RAVENSBOROUGH GR, WILLENHALL
Two Bed Mid-Town House, Spacious Lounge, Fitted Breakfast Kitchen, Modern Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Front & Rear Gardens, Access To Shared Parking. Viewing Advised!

£525 PCM



GREADIER STREET, WILLENHALL
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Kings Road, Calf Heath WV10

£500,000

Larchmere Drive, Essington WV11

£310,000

Lakelot Close, Willenhall WV12

£184,950

Perry Hall Drive, Summer Hayes WV12

£168,000

Perth Road, Summer Hayes WV12

£160,000

The Hayes, Summer Hayes WV12

£160,000

Gipsy Lane, Willenhall WV13

£150,000

Orchard Road, Willenhall WV13

£150,000

Granbourne Road, Bentley WS2

£145,000

Coppice Lane, Willenhall

£140,000

Charlecote Rise, Hadley Heath WV13

£140,000

Queens Lea, Willenhall WV12

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Spindle Tree Rise, Willenhall WV12

£120,000

Bilston Lane, Willenhall WV13

£100,000

Clarkes Lane, Willenhall WV13

£90,000

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LOT 1
Wednesbury Road
Walsall

25th and 31st March 10:45am

This two bedroom terraced property is situated in a popular residential area a short distance from Walsall Town Centre. The property is in need of complete modernisation and all rooms require updating. The property at hand the property is ideally suited towards an investor. Ground Floor Front reception room (3.6m x 3.6m). Rear reception Room with access to cellar (3.8m x 3.6m). Kitchen with rear door providing access to garden (3.8m x 2m), Bedroom (2.6m x 2m) First Floor Bedroom one overlooking front of the property (3.6m x 3.6m), Bedroom two with windows to front (2.7m x 2m), Bedroom three with windows overlooking the rear garden (3.6m x 2.7m). Bathroom (1.9m x 1.1m). Outside At the front of the property there is a driveway giving access to the front door and garage.

•Guide Price £64,000 PLUS

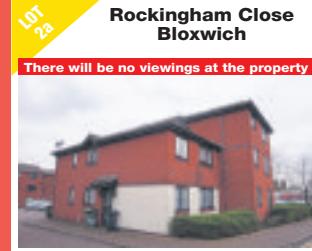


LOT 2
Derwent Close
Willenhall

25th and 31st March 12pm

Situated in a popular residential area this three bedroom semi detached property is in need of modernisation. The property is ideally suited to investors. Ground Floor Front door leads to entrance W.C. and Lounge (7.2m x 4.8m). Kitchen with rear door providing access to garden (3.8m x 2m). First Floor Bedroom one overlooking front of the property (3.6m x 3.6m), Bedroom two with windows to front (2.7m x 2m), Bedroom three with windows overlooking the rear garden (3.6m x 2.7m). Bathroom (1.9m x 1.1m). Outside At the front of the property there is a driveway giving access to the front door and garage.

•Guide Price £115,000 PLUS

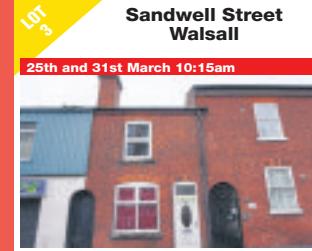


LOT 2a
Rockingham Close
Bloxwich

There will be no viewings at the property

Purpose built ground floor flat situated close to Bloxwich centre with all facilities provided. Sold subject to an Assured Shorthold Tenancy from 7th December 2016 for 6 months at £395.00 PCM. The accommodation comprises: Ground Floor, Front door leads to entrance W.C. and Lounge (3.6m x 3.6m). Kitchen with rear door providing access to garden (3.8m x 2m). First Floor Bedroom one overlooking front of the property (3.6m x 3.6m), Bedroom two with windows to front (2.7m x 2m), Bedroom three with windows overlooking the rear garden (3.6m x 2.7m). Bathroom (1.9m x 1.1m). Outside At the front of the property there is a driveway giving access to the front door and garage.

•Guide Price £55,000 PLUS



LOT 3
Sandwell Street
Walsall

25th and 31st March 10:15am

This two bedroom terraced property is in need of modernisation. The property is situated a short distance from Walsall town centre and the A34 which offers a direct transport link into Birmingham. This property is ideally suited towards investors and with all amenities close at hand it comprises: Ground Floor Lounge (3.6m x 3.6m), Reception Room (3.6m x 3.6m), Kitchen (3.2m x 1.5m), Bathroom (2.1m x 1.4m) First Floor Bedroom one with window to front, Bedroom Two 3.1m x 2.3m with window to front, Bathroom having matching white suite comprising panelled bath, wash hand basin and w.c.

•Guide Price £75,000 PLUS



LOT 4
Land, Hen Lane
Coventry

By appointment through Auctioneers

This Freehold development site which amounts to approx 0.5 of an acre is offered with Planning (subject to conditions) Coventry City Council Application No: FUL/2014/1180 for erection of 8 residential dwellings. Situated on Hen Lane, Hen Lane is a local road connecting Hen Lane, the site offers an ideal opportunity for a small to medium size developer. The proposed development includes 4 detached properties of approximately 90 sq metres (968 sq ft) each and 4 semi detached properties at approx 77 sq metres (828 sq ft). Tenure: Freehold

•Guide Price £350,000 PLUS

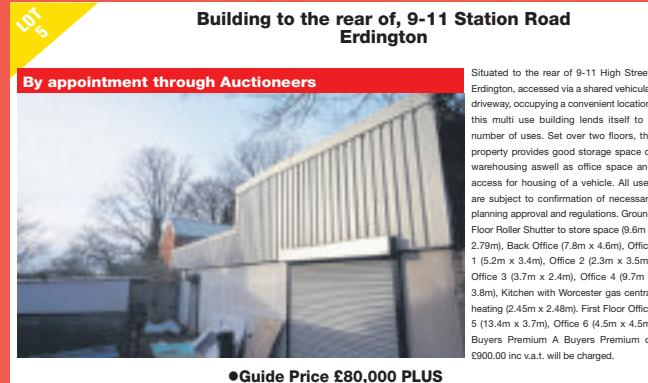


LOT 4a
Station Street
Darlaston

There will be no viewings at the property

The Auctioneer has not inspected the property, however assumes the accommodation is as follows:- Victorian and terraced property having Two Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Bathroom, Two Bedrooms. Tenure: Freehold Tenancy: The property is currently tenanted and the tenant pays £345.20 every four weeks.

•Guide Price £59,000 PLUS



LOT 5
Building to the rear of, 9-11 Station Road
Erdington

By appointment through Auctioneers

•Guide Price £80,000 PLUS



LOT 5a
Land, Rudge Close
Willenhall

Viewings: This site is open to viewings

Residential building plot with Planning Permission (subject to conditions) Application No 14/0650/FL. Situated on a popular residential development for the erection of six 2 bedroom houses and two 3 bed houses. Subject to the outcome of the current planning consents the land may be considered suitable for residential redevelopment. The proposed dwellings would need to be sited with care to avoid impacting adjoining dwellings. The proposed access is not currently defined. Sought Mains services are understood to be available in the vicinity of the property, but prospective purchasers should make their own independent enquiries as to the suitability of services for their particular requirements. Ground Conditions &

•Guide Price £150,000 PLUS



LOT 6
Unett Court, St. Matthews Road
Smethwick

27th March and 3rd April at 11am

This one bedroom ground floor flat is in need of modernisation. The flat is situated in a popular residential area within Smethwick and is within walking distance of multiple schools and Windmill shopping centre. Ideally suited towards an investor and with all amenities close at hand the flat requires: Tenure Leasehold Ground Floor Lounge with window and door to rear (5m x 2.7m), Kitchen (2.5m x 1.5m), Bedroom (3.7m x 2.2m), Bathroom (2.7m x 1.5m). Outside The flat has gated parking. Tenure Leasehold, 125 years from 01/01/2007

•Guide Price £25,000 PLUS



LOT 7
Sandwell Street
Walsall

25th and 31st March all at 9.45 am

This three bedroom detached property is in need of modernisation. The property is situated in a popular residential area and is within walking distance of multiple schools. This makes the property ideally suited towards both home owners as well as investors. Tenure Freehold. Ground Floor, Front door leads to dining room (3.4m x 3m), Lounge (4.5m x 3.3m), Kitchen with door to lean to (3.2m x 2.8m) First Floor, Landing Leads to bedroom one (3.6m x 3m), bedroom two (3.3m x 2.8m), Bedroom three, Bathroom (3.4m x 2m). Outside At the front of the property there is a pathway leading to the front door and at the rear there is a small garden.

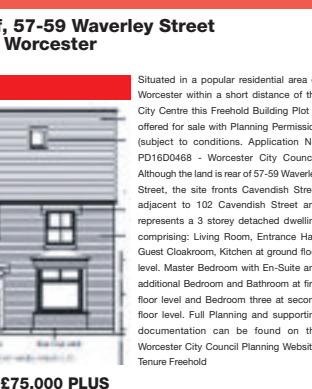
•Guide Price £137,500 PLUS



LOT 8
Land Rear of, 57-59 Waverley Street
Worcester

The site is open for inspection

•Guide Price £75,000 PLUS



LOT 9
Alumwell Road
Walsall

Situated in a popular residential area this three bedroom semi detached property is in need of modernisation. The property is located a short drive from both Walsall town centre and Junction 10 which provides popular transport links to both Birmingham and Wolverhampton. With all amenities close at hand. Tenure Freehold



LOT 10
Park Hall Road
Walsall

24th and 31st March at 11am

Situated in a popular residential area this three bedroom detached dormer bungalow is set on a generous corner plot. The property is within walking distance from Park Hall school and a short drive from Walsall town centre. The property is in need of modernisation and with all amenities close at hand it comprises: Ground Floor Lounge (8.3m x 3.7m), Conservatory (4.1m x 2.3m), Shower Room (3m x 2m), Kitchen (3.9m x 2.2m), Bedroom One (3.8m x 3m), Bedroom Two (3.9m x 3m), Shower Room 2, Garage (10m x 2.8m) First Floor Bedroom Three (6.9m x 3.5m) Outside At the front of the property there is a large driveway as well as a garden. At the rear of the property there is a well maintained garden.

•Guide Price £350,000 PLUS

●Guides are provided as an indication of each seller's minimum expectation. They are not necessarily figures which a property will sell for and may change at any time prior to the auction. Each property will be offered subject to a Reserve (a figure below which the Auctioneer cannot sell the property during the auction) which we expect will be set within the Guide Range or no more than 10% above a single figure Guide



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- EPC - E

£350,000

Walton Heath, Turnberry Estate

- Detached Family Home
- Four Reception Rooms
- Four Generous Bedrooms
- En-Suite Bathroom
- Integral Garage
- Off Road Parking
- Great Transport Links
- EPC - D

£275,000

Victoria Terrace, Walsall

- Victorian Apartment
- Ground Floor
- Lounge with Open Fireplace
- Superb Views
- Two Double Bedrooms
- EPC - E

£275,000



Castle Drive, Willenhall

- Refurbished Bungalow
- Hayes Development
- Large Driveway
- Spacious Lounge
- Two Bedrooms
- New Gas Central Heating System
- Refitted Howdens Kitchen
- EPC - E

£167,500

Waters Keep, Leamore

- Lounge with Bay window
- Open plan kitchen/dining room
- Ensuite to Master Bedroom
- Downstairs W.C.
- French doors to rear garden
- Three Spacious Bedrooms

£161,500

Formby Way, Turnberry

- Detached Residence
- Excellent Condition Throughout
- Three Bedrooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Turnberry Development

£240,000

Waters Keep, Leamore

- Light and airy Lounge
- Spacious Kitchen/Diner
- Downstairs W.C.
- Rear French Doors
- Three Spacious Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom

From £145,995

£138,000

Mulberry Place, Dudley Fields

- NEW BLDG
- Three Bedroom Detached
- Entrance Hall
- Kitchen/Diner
- Lounge
- Downstairs WC

£159,950

Water Reed Grove, Leamore

- Modern Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Spacious Kitchen / Diner
- Lounge with Porcelain Tiled Floor
- Guest Cloakroom
- Three Double Bedrooms

£159,950

Waters Keep, Leamore

- Light and airy Lounge
- Spacious Kitchen / Diner
- Downstairs W.C.
- Rear French Doors
- Three Spacious Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom

From £136,500

Harrison Street, Bloxwich

- Immaculately Presented Period Property
- Refurbished Throughout
- Refitted Kitchen & Luxurious Bathroom
- Two Reception Rooms
- Three Bedrooms
- Double Glazing
- Viewing Essential
- EPC - D

£125,000

Mountbatten Road, Bentley

- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Spacious Lounge
- Modern Fitted Kitchen
- Fully Tiled Bathroom
- Two Double Bedrooms

£120,000

£120,000

Star Close, Bentley

- Cash Buyers Only
- Modern Semi-Detached Two Bedroom End Terrace
- Modern Double Glazing
- Kitchen/Diner
- Two Double Bedrooms
- EPC - E

O.I.E.O £87,000

Pelsall Lane, Rushall

- No Chain
- Tiny Bed Room Bungalow
- Low Maintenance Required
- Off Road Parking
- Regular Bus Routes to Local Towns

£110,000

Foster Street, Bloxwich

- Victorian Terrace
- Built in 1904
- Two Reception Rooms
- Ground Floor WC
- Two Double Glazing
- Ideal First Purchase
- Suitable Buy-To-Let
- EPC - E

£90,000

Taverners Close, Willenhall

- One Bedroom Ground Floor Maisonette
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Double Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Front Garden
- Bus Routes Close-By
- EPC - C

O.I.E.O £80,000

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Farewell to a legend –
PK rides off into sunset

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By George!
Bowerman
hits winner

Rushall 1 Buxton 0

OLYMPIC put in a battling display to secure three hard-earned Evo-Stik Premier League points.

The Picts took an early lead when George Bowerman was alive to a kind bounce inside the area to lift the ball over the keeper and open his scoring account for the club in the third minute.

It was a lively start by the home side and Joe Hull went close to doubling the lead as he headed a corner just wide.

As Buxton started to get into the game, Joe McGee got himself into a good position inside the area only for his effort from a tight angle to be bravely blocked by Sam Whittall.

Right at the end of the opening period, Picts' Isaac Cooper delivered an inviting low ball that found Craig Bannister at the far post but his effort to be blocked.

The early action of the second period saw Michael Partodikromo rattle the woodwork with a strike from distance.

Bannister also went close for the Picts before McGee headed over from a corner at the other end. But Rushall survived a spell of pressure towards the end to see the game out and secure a good three points.

Pelsall Villa 0 Chelmsley Town 0
PELSALL Villa and Chelmsley Town played out a goalless draw at The Bush in a lower end of the table clash.

With both teams coming into the match in need of three points to lift them out of the relegation battle, it was unlikely to be high scoring match.

Both sides shared the few chances created and with Villa reduced to 10 men on 70 minutes the momentum swung the way of the visitors. The Villains could have won it late on with Ryan Wilkins shooting wide from a good chance but the points shared was a fair result.

Pelsall's next match is away to Littleton on Saturday.

Championship in Barbarians' grasp with game to play

Bloxwich 3 Ludlow 1

BLOXWICH Hockey Club go into the final weekend of the season knowing a win will see them crowned champions.

The Mens First XI knew victory here would keep their chances of winning the league alive – and they didn't disappoint.

They started strongly with Jamie Roberts controlling an aerial ball at the top of the D and finishing beautifully to give Bloxwich the lead.

Another goal followed with a deft Jake Perkins touch from a short corner.

Ludlow got back into the game and threatened at times but Bloxwich managed to take a 3-0 lead from a well finished goal by Gary Williams on his birthday.

Bloxwich were the stronger side towards the end of the second half but Bloxwich managed to steady the ship and defended well to hold onto the lead.

A solid win for Bloxwich followed by the news that league leaders Bromsgrove had drawn with Wednesbury means that the fate of the league title is now in Bloxwich's hands. They need just a victory at Leamington on Saturday.



Ryan sets sights on Paralympics



ALDRIDGE shooter Ryan Cockbill has got off to a golden start as looks to claim a Paralympic Gold medal.

The world champion shooter has competed at the last two Paralympic games. Both times he finished just outside the top eight in his category, narrowly missing out on advancing to the finals and a chance for a medal.

He now has his sights set on Tokyo 2020 but in the meantime the 26-year-old has to keep active in both training and competitions.

Last month, he competed in the Al Ain World Shooting Para Sport World

By Jordan Harris

Cup, winning the R5 category for mixed 10 metre air rifle prone shooting and taking silver in the R4 category for mixed 10 metre air rifle standing shooting.

This puts Ryan in good shape to improve on his Paralympic performances in three years time. He said: "I don't put enormous pressure on myself, most shooters don't reach their peak until their mid 30s or early 40s. At the moment I feel in the best form of my

life. All I can do is keep practising and taking part in competitions."

Ryan first got involved in disability sport after breaking his neck in a freak paddling pool accident in 2006. In May 2007 he was introduced to a number of sports at the Stoke Mandeville Spinal Unit Games and first tried target shooting.

His first taste of international competition was the 2010 IPC Shooting World Cup in Szczecin, Poland, and he won four trophies. He returns for the Szczecin World Shooting Para Sport Grand Prix in April.

TOP SIX HOPES ARE ALL AT SEA

Southend 3 Walsall 2

FOR reasons that have been well documented – it was always unlikely Walsall would clinch a place in the top six this season.

But any hopes of finishing in the play-offs are now as good as over following some horror defending on the south coast.

Jon Whitney's side entered this crucial six-pointer knowing defeat for either team would end their faint hopes of reaching the Championship.

In the end it was Phil Brown's Shrimpers who came away with the points and their season aims still intact, writes Joe Masi.

Yet it could – and should – have been the other way around. After 25 minutes at Roots Hall, you couldn't help but feel Lady Luck was smiling on the Saddlers.

Forgotten man Franck Moussa had given his side a two-goal lead after coming on as an early replacement for the injured Erhun Oztumer, two carbon copy goals made by Joe Edwards.

Prod

And, as the clock ticked past the hour, Walsall looked in control. Brown had to gamble and did with Jason Demetriou and Theo Robinson thrown into the fold.

And a frantic 20-minute spell saw the hosts score three times – with all the goals coming from set-pieces. For the first, the Saddlers switched off to allow Ben Coker to send Will Atkinson away down the left.

The winger's cross was then headed home by Nile Ranger and within minutes, Walsall only half-cleared a deep Anthony Wordsworth free-kick with Anton Ferdinand able to prod home.

Walsall seemed unable to halt Southend's momentum, so when James O'Connor tripped Wordsworth right on the edge of the box, you sensed the home side would complete a dramatic turnaround. So it proved as Simon Cox curled an exquisite strike over the wall and into the net.

Whitney now has the rest of this season and the summer to solve the problems at the back. Only once he does will a top-six place be achievable.

Dennis, 87, still gets his kicks



Dennis Whistance shows off his skills to Saddlers players

AN 87-year-old footballer determined to not hang up his boots has been rewarded for his love of the beautiful game by training with the Saddlers.

Dennis Whistance, from Bentley, headed to the club's Essington training ground meet players and staff.

Whistance has been a regular at walking football sessions organised by Walsall's Community Programme for the past three years. He cycles to sessions held at Sneyd Community Association on Tuesdays, and also plays at the Banks's Stadium on Friday evenings.

He admitted he was delighted to meet Jon Whitney and his players – despite being a

Wolves fan. "To have the chance to come and look around Walsall's training ground and meet the players has been wonderful," he said.

"I'm a Wolves fan. In the 1938/39 season I went up the Wolves and it stuck. But Walsall are my second team and I saw them play a lot at the old Fellows Park."

Whistance once toured Wolves' Compton training base after his grandchildren won an auction – and scored three penalties past Carl Ikeme.

Whistance said he walking football had kept him mobile, and helped him to forge new friendships. "Most people my age have very little to do. It's important to stay active."

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